IGA POWER ISSUE 3 JULY 1991

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F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

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AMIGA POWER

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TOP CREATORS TELL ALL ON P64

THE PERFECT CONVERSION?

The truth about Toki (and why Ocean France keep getting it right)

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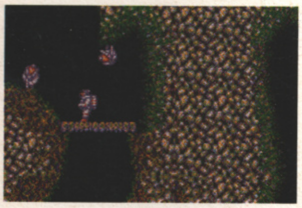
LOOK! AMIGA POWER DISK 3

QUICK! HURRY OVER TO PAGE 5 FOR FULL DETAILS! →



EXILE

Exclusive world specially prepared for Amiga Power by Audiogenic

PREHISTORIK

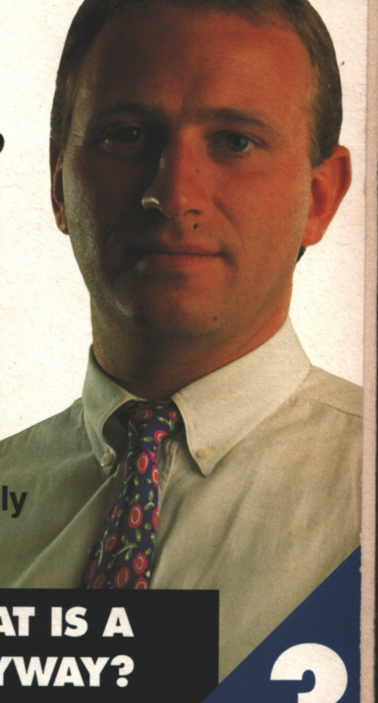
Full playable demo of the new Titus caveman romp

PLUS! THREE GREAT PD GAMES

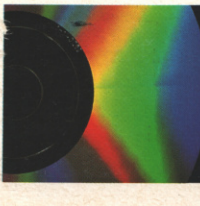
AMOEBA INVADERS • Classic arcade style action
TILES • Imagine *Shanghai* and you're almost there
FRANTIC FREDDIE • 'Frantic' platform antics

If you can't see your disk stuck here go and ask your newsagent immediately!

'WE'RE SICK OF BORING FLIGHT SIMS'



Jeremy Smith of Core Design on their user-friendly chopper game



JUST WHAT IS A CDTV ANYWAY?

All is revealed on page 52

ISSUE 3

IT'S GOT TO BE G

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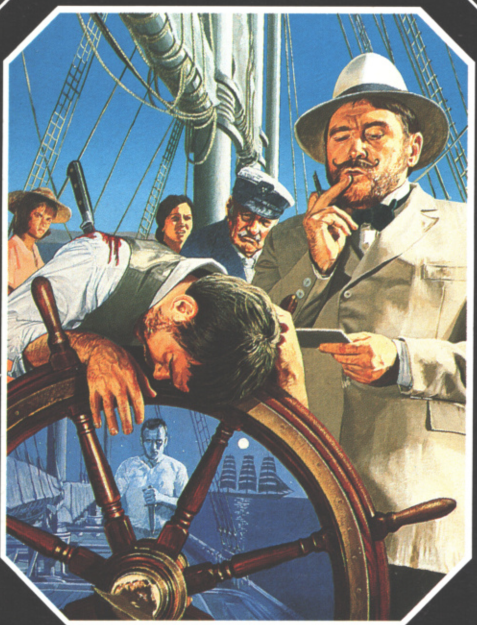

Screen shot from CBM Amiga.

Based in the 1920's, Inspector Raoul Dussentier is aboard a ship in the Mediterranean. But no sooner has the cruise begun when Raoul is summoned to investigate a crime – the murder of his host Niklos Karaboudjan, the Greek shipping magnate. It's up to Raoul to throw some light on this sinister mystery!

- *Wide range of actions, including the option to question other characters in true Agatha Christie style.*
- *PC version features 256 colours, Ad Lib & Roland sonic support.*
- *Amiga version features 32 colours.*

ATARI ST, AMIGA & PC (CGA, EGA, VGA, TANDY AD-LIB & ROLAND).

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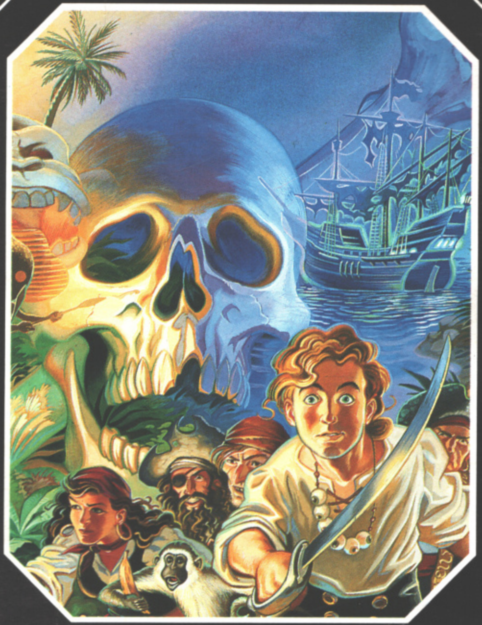
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND™



Screen shot from IBM PC.

A comedy set during the "golden age" of piracy in the Caribbean. The game's twisty plot leads our hero, fresh from the old world, on an hilarious, complex, swashbuckling search for the fabled Secret of Monkey Island.

- *Features dazzling 3D graphics, an original reggae sound track and a point 'n' click no-typing interface.*
- *A wide variety of original entertaining puzzles, unravel hidden meanings in hilarious repartee.*
- *Proportionally scaled animated characters and cinematic pans and camera angles.*

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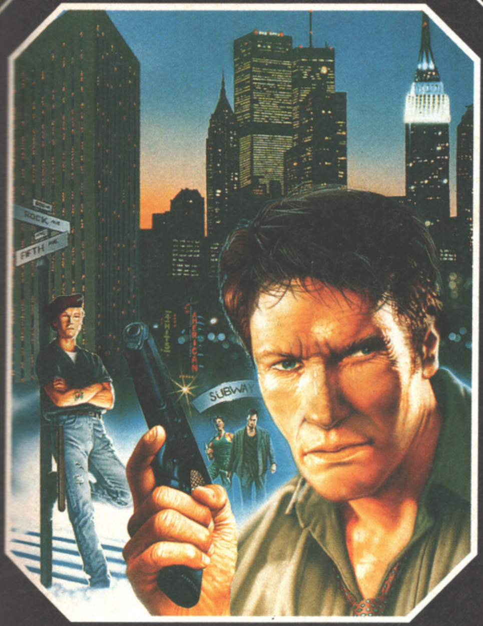
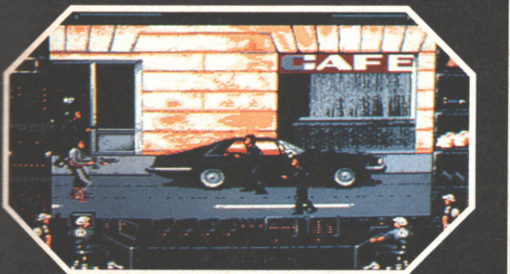


Screen shot from IBM PC.



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- *A multitude of brilliant 256 colour scrolling game screens.*
- *Incredible digitalised "Motion Graphics" (featuring real actors and models).*

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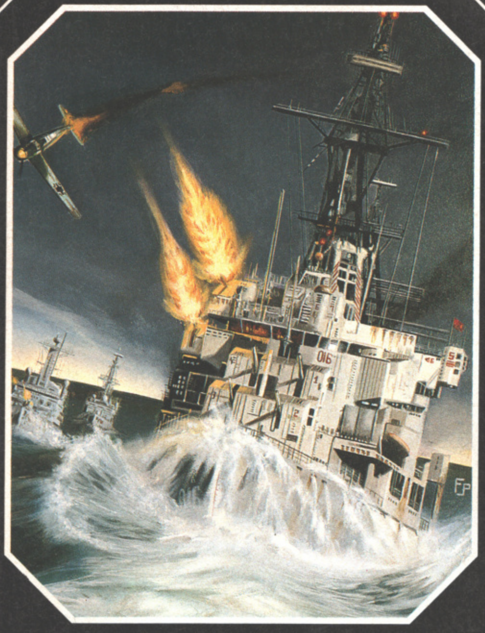
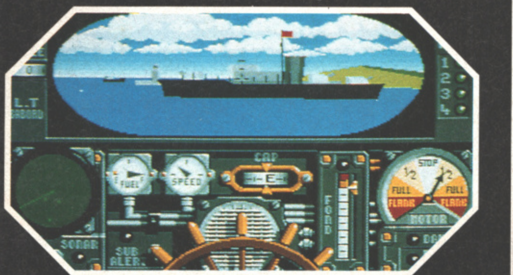
From the creators of Sherman M4



Screen shot from CBM Amiga.



It's World War II – the naval forces of the world are waging war in fierce and unrelenting sea battles ... You must command the destroyer and succeed in beating naval and air forces in 15 challenging missions.

A.D.S. is a stunning sea battle simulator using 3D technology.

- *40 page manual includes detailed maps of the combat zones together with historical and technical information.*
- *Adjustable difficulty level will suit all levels of player.*

ATARI ST, AMIGA & PC (EGA, CGA).

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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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AMIGA POWER
ISSUE THREE JULY 1991

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A big AMIGA POWER thank you to Pat McDonald for putting our cover disk together for us this month, Gary Carr of Bullfrog for our first 'In the style of...' and Tamara Ward for continuing services etc.

COMPETITION WINNER: A disappointing shortage of pictures of people you fancy in response to last month's contents page compo sees us holding it open just that little bit longer in case some good entries start to flood in. So far there's been not enough scantily-clad chicks and far too many joke entries (statues, computer game characters etc) for our liking. The 'take a picture of your wife/girlfriend/sister in the shower' compo has been temporarily postponed.
THIS MONTH'S COMPO: Art editor Trev's cat Spotty got run over recently (sob) so he's getting a new kitten soon – the one he wants is fluffy, white...and doesn't have a name yet! Send in your suggestions for what she should be called (it's a bit like Blue Peter, this bit) and not only will the winner get the honour of having his or her name used, a grateful Trev will send them some free software too. (Pathetic attempts like 'Snowy' or 'Whitey' not allowed!)
NEXT ISSUE: See the back cover!

AMIGA POWER comes to you from the ridiculously fast growing Future Publishing, Britain's biggest (and bestest!) publisher of 'leisure' computing titles. At the moment we 'do' Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, Your Sinclair, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, New Computer Express, Sega Power, PC Plus, PC Answers, 8000 Plus, Classic CD, Needlecraft and (new this month!) Mountain Biking UK, but that's just the start! Exciting new (and very secret) projects are being prepared for launch on an unsuspecting world even as we speak!

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10 TRUE STORIES

New Amiga games for £2.99! AMIGA POWER sales sensation! And more! All the Amiga games news that's fit to print (and a little bit more besides).

17 THE CHARTS

The going-uppers, the coming-downers, the hovering-about-in-the-middle-a-bit-ers. Here's the official Gallup run down on all the top sellers.

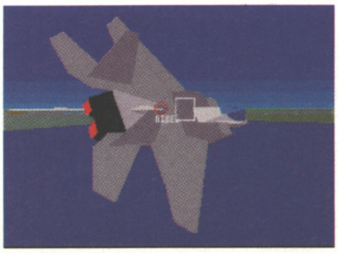
41 COMPLETE CONTROL

Ten (yes, ten!) pages of hints and tips, making this not just the biggest Complete Control so far, but the biggest tips section in any Amiga mag! This issue, massive level maps of *Switchblade 2*, plus *Brat*, *MegaTraveller 1*, *Supercars 2* and more!

52 JUST WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT CDTV?

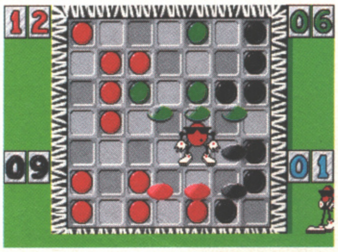
After all, it's just an Amiga attached to a CD player, isn't it? Colin Campbell – our brand new Deputy Editor – talks to the people involved...

GAMES OF THE MONTH



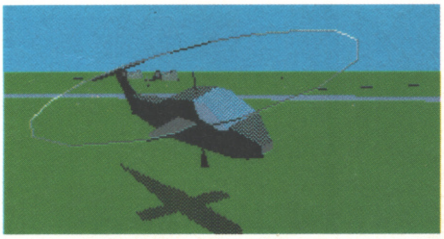
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II
Faster, harder, higher... Is this the best flight sim yet? Page 20

TOKI
To see how a conversion *should* be done, flick to... Page 26



SPOT
At last! a board game that *really* works on the Amiga. Page 36

LIFE & DEATH
Mindscape's operation game comes under the knife... Page 38



WHY WE'RE SICK OF BORING FLIGHT SIMS

From *Rick Dangerous* to *Chuck Rock*, Core Design have shown how easy it can be to add interesting new twists to familiar game styles. Now they're tackling a flight sim, and they've some pretty strong opinions on how that should be done too... Turn to page 60

93 SUBSCRIBE!

Get Amiga Power delivered hot-off-the-presses and straight to your door! With games like *Gods* (!), *Speedball 2* (!!) and *Lemmings* (!!!) up for grabs (not to mention the money you save!) you'd be utterly mad to miss it!

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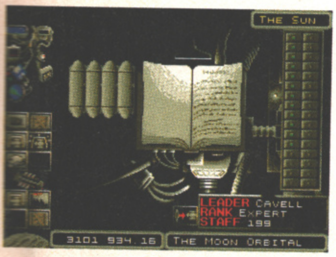
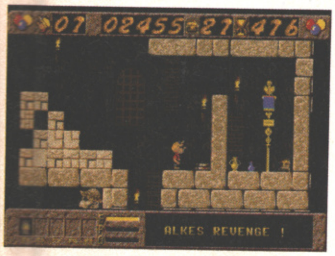


DEUTEROS
Epic, yes, but is it any good? We're over the moon... Page 30



P.P. HAMMER
Platform puzzles and daring double entendres. Page 32

56 IF I WAS A..?
Fighter pilot? Pop star? Lorry driver? If they weren't programming games, how would the industry's top coders be earning a crust? Gary Penn asks the question...

95 THE BOTTOM LINE
Close to 300 of the last year's best games rated in AMIGA POWER's constantly-updated, no-holds-barred guide. Six pages of glorious Uppers, tragic Downers and the all-enveloping Bottom Line...

102 DO THE WRITE THING
Opinion, comment and a fair amount of nonsense. This is the letters bit, so you've only yourselves to blame...

104 IN THE STYLE OF...
The first of a new regular back page series, where famous graphic artists re-interpret their old games in the style of someone completely different. This month, Bullfrog's Gary Carr does *Powermonger* in the style of surrealist Salvador Dali.

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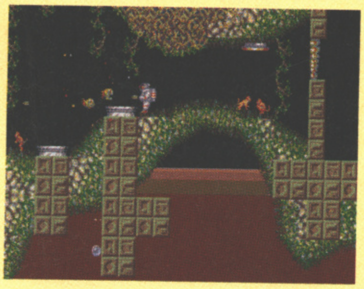
WIN A CDTV!
And be the most happening person you know! Page 89

Welcome to the first of our 'proper' AMIGA POWER disks, packed with the very best in playable previews (and a few other bits and pieces besides). Hold tight for an exclusively prepared world from Audiogenic's *Exile*, a playable preview of *Prehistorik* from Titus and more...

disk
THREE

AND THIS IS DISK THREE

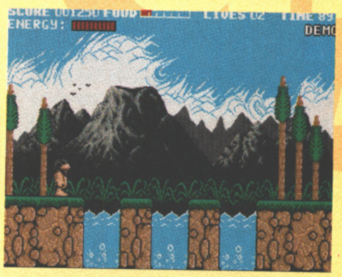


EXILE

Audiogenic's astounding re-definition of the arcade adventure received a massive 89 per cent in our very first issue. Now the programmers have prepared a very special playable extract for us – one that doesn't actually appear in the finished game at all and is exclusive to AMIGA POWER – so you can see exactly how good it is for yourself. The following players guide has been prepared for you by the game's greatest fan, Gary Penn...

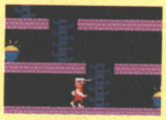
PREHISTORIK

After *Chuck Rock* and *Toki* comes this cute and loveable scrolling caveman romp from Titus. Guide the world's greediest Neanderthal through caves, across rivers and over goodness knows hoW many obstacles in his never-ending quest for more food. Stuart Campbell shows you how...



PLUS! THE BEST OF PD!

TILES
Shanghai happens to be one of the most difficult-to-get-hold-of (and most asked after) of our All-time Top 100 games, so while you wait for Activision's *Shanghai 2*, why not spend some time with *Tiles*, a nifty little PD variant?



FRANTIC FREDDIE
It's frantic, it's got someone called Freddie in it, and it's excellent to boot. Climb ladders, collect food, and try and avoid getting caught by the baddies – it's ridiculously simple but ludicrously good fun. What more could you want?

AMOEBA INVADERS
A classic PD version of the world's oldest arcade game, *Amoeba Invaders* offers dumb-as-they-come aliens, a handful of buildings to hide behind and one weedy little gun. We'll even show you how it all works (as if it needed explaining)...

It's all explained over the page... ➚

disk THREE

LOADING...

Plug a mouse into Joystick Port One and a joystick into Joystick Port Two. Ensure the computer is switched off, and insert your disk into the internal drive. Switch the computer on, and you should be greeted with a menu screen. Choose which game or preview you wish to play and then either press the respective function key or move the mouse pointer to the respective box and press the left-hand mouse button. Your chosen game should now load and run, but make sure you don't remove the disk from the drive during play.

YOUR DISK DOESN'T WORK?

If you experience any problems loading any of the programs on the disk, there are a few things you can do. First, try repeating the whole loading process making sure you don't have any extra peripherals (external disk drives, printers etc) connected to your Amiga. If that doesn't do the trick, try loading one of the other programs instead, then exit it and reload the program you originally wanted to play. Still no luck? Well, you might be able to sort things using the Disk Doctor program that you received with your machine (it's on your Workbench disk, and instructions on using it can be found in the Amiga user's manual). Still stuck? Don't panic! Simply send the disk back to us along with your name and address (your equipment configuration would be useful) and we'll get a new one off to you just as soon as we can. Send us the disk only, NOT the whole magazine to *AMIGA POWER Disk Three Returns, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW*. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

EXILE

Publisher: Audiogenic
Authors: JC Smith & PJM Irvin (With Assistance From W Reeve)

A PREFACE

You read the review in Issue One of AMIGA POWER. Now you can experience the future of arcade adventures for real with this exclusive playable preview – a mini-adventure specially prepared for your delectation and delight by none other than *Exile*'s authors. This isn't a section of what will be the commercially available version of *Exile* – that's approximately 20 times larger, with a full RAM and disk load and save option, dozens of weapons, equipment and strange creatures, and hundreds of puzzles not found here. This playable preview of *Exile* takes the authors in full knowledge of all its secrets 10 minutes to play right through and complete, compared to six whole hours for the Real Thing.

The real *Exile* is available from your local software store as of the 25th June. The price? A most agreeable £25.99.

Here then, is the taste of what's to come...

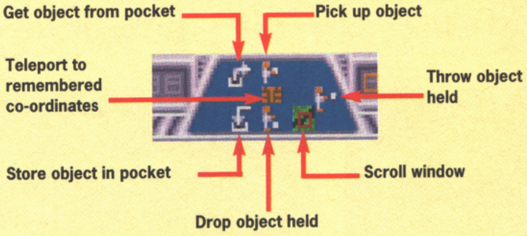
THE STORY SO FAR ...

This adventure takes place some time before the Triax caper that is the real *Exile*. Our hero's cute pet alien, Fluffy, has been kidnapped by mischievous monkey-like imps. Having landed on the small planet inhabited by these beings, your task is to seek out Fluffy and rescue it. Take it away, Rodrigo...

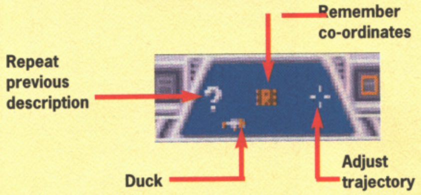
CONTROLLING THE HERO

The hero is capable of performing many functions, though not all of them are present in this preview (for example, you cannot transfer energy from one piece of equipment to another). Control of this versatile character is either exclusively via the keyboard or primarily with a joystick (plugged into Port Two) – or a suitable combination of both. The use of the keyboard is your best bet for a fuller flavour during play. It does take a little while to get used to the layout, particularly with the quantity of keys involved, but they are in fact sensibly positioned, and the time and effort spent mastering them will be rewarded.

ICON SET ONE


Get object from pocket
Pick up object
Teleport to remembered co-ordinates
Throw object held
Store object in pocket
Scroll window
Drop object held

ICON SET TWO


Remember co-ordinates
Repeat previous description
Duck
Adjust trajectory

THRUSTING

Thrusting causes a pressurised stream of air (or water where appropriate) particles to be blasted from the hero's jetpack. Note that the jetpack uses small amounts of energy (shown on the panel directly beneath the playfield).

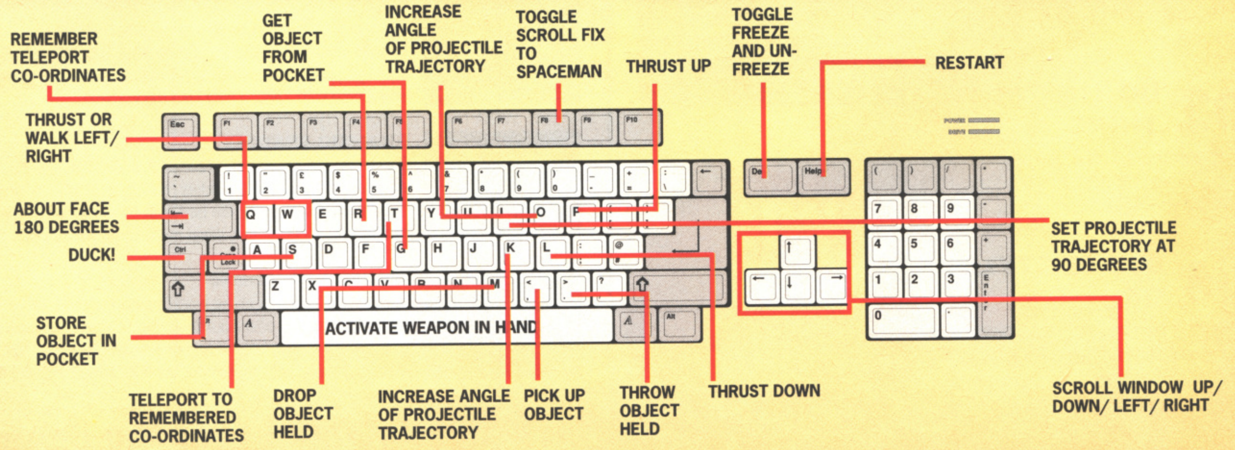
AIMING AND FIRING

When it comes to shooting and throwing, the trajectory a projectile will follow is easily altered. Bullets can be shot and objects thrown in any forward direction, thus affecting the horizontal and vertical distances travelled. Using the joystick system, the trajectory is altered by holding down the fire button and moving the joystick. Using the joystick system also deactivates the use of the SPACE BAR as a fire button.

PICKING UP OBJECTS AND DROPPING THEM

An object is picked up on contact if the relevant key is depressed beforehand. When using the joystick control system, hold down the fire button until you walk into the desired object. With an object in →

KEYBOARD CONTROL


REMEMBER TELEPORT CO-ORDINATES
GET OBJECT FROM POCKET
INCREASE ANGLE OF PROJECTILE TRAJECTORY
TOGGLE SCROLL FIX TO SPACEMAN
THRUST UP
TOGGLE FREEZE AND UN-FREEZE
RESTART
THRUST OR WALK LEFT/ RIGHT
ABOUT FACE 180 DEGREES
DUCK!
SET PROJECTILE TRAJECTORY AT 90 DEGREES
ACTIVATE WEAPON IN HAND
STORE OBJECT IN POCKET
TELEPORT TO REMEMBERED CO-ORDINATES
DROP OBJECT HELD
INCREASE ANGLE OF PROJECTILE TRAJECTORY
PICK UP OBJECT
THROW OBJECT HELD
THRUST DOWN
SCROLL WINDOW UP/ DOWN/ LEFT/ RIGHT

➔

disk THREE

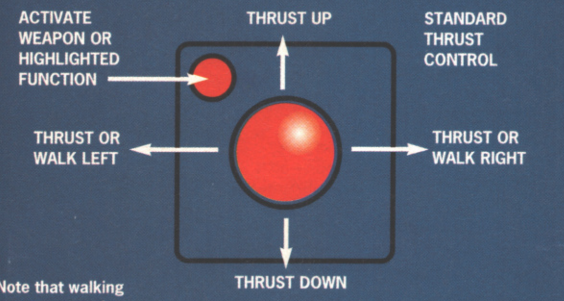
JOYSTICK CONTROL

Before you do anything, turn off that auto-fire feature. Now you can use the joystick to thrust and fire and even – if the mood takes you – activate the many other functions. You can resort to using the keyboard exclusively at absolutely any time, so there's no need to feel put upon.

Two sets of icons are used to select functions or actions when using the joystick control system. To access the icons, you do actually need to use the keyboard – but only briefly. A press of the SPACE BAR calls up the first set of icons in the status panel below the play area. A second press of the SPACE BAR calls up a second set of icons. A third press of the SPACE BAR returns to normal thrust control.

To choose a function or action simply move the joystick in the direction of the desired icon and it will be highlighted. Pressing the fire button will now activate the chosen function (note that some functions require the fire button to be held down while the joystick is moved – releasing the fire button then returns to standard thrust control).

Please note also that the respective icons of the functions not present in this preview are never shown during play or anywhere else for that matter.



Note that walking over scenery does not use fuel.

your possession it can be dropped, thrown or (size permitting) stored away (see USING YOUR POCKETS). Note that *Exile*'s level of realism extends to the fact that the lighter an object, the further it can be thrown. This is worth bearing in mind when it comes to solving some of the problems encountered.

USING YOUR POCKETS

You have four pockets into which objects of suitable size can be stored. If an object seems small enough to be stored but won't, all four pockets are occupied. But don't drop the object in question – cycle through those stored in the pockets and drop one of those instead. The desired object is automatically stored in the remaining pocket. Note that the last object stored is the first object removed. Note also that stored objects do not affect your weight. When using the joystick system, releasing the fire button returns you to standard thrust control.

PERSONAL TELEPORTATION

This is one of the most important functions available. By registering your co-ordinates (aural acknowledgement is given) you can teleport there at any time. Only four teleport co-ordinates can be stored at any one time, plus a default set of co-ordinates for your spaceship – a last resort if all else fails. Two points worth bearing in mind: each teleportation causes the destination co-ordinates to be lost, and the fifth set of co-ordinates remembered replaces the first. Note that you don't actually die in *Exile* – instead you are teleported to the previously remembered position and points are lost.

You cannot teleport when you are holding an object in your hands. If the teleportation is involuntary through loss of energy, the object is dropped. It can even fall out of your pocket, so it's wise to teleport before this happens. If you arrive at your destination with a substantial energy loss, you won't be able to access any function for a couple of seconds. When your energy is very low, the EXILE logo in the status panel will flash.

ALTERING THE SCROLL WINDOW

The progress of your on-screen alter-ego is seen through the window which follows the scrolling landscape. You can alter the positioning of the window relative to your character by approximately half a screen in any direction, which also allows you to look around corners, so to speak. When using the joystick system, holding down the fire button allows you to move the joystick and scroll the window. Release the fire button to return to the standard thrust control.

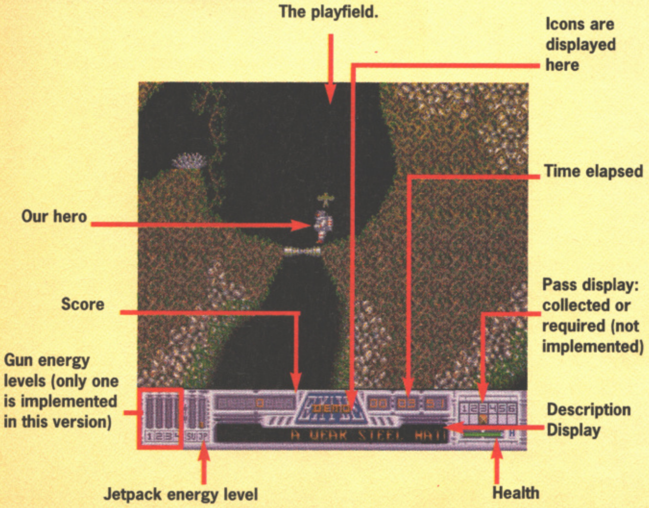
ELAPSED TIME

For every second which passes a point is removed from your score. Points are given for performing such tasks as solving puzzles and killing creatures or robots.

WEY HEY HEY! A SPECIAL COMPETITION!

When this preview is completed, the hour digits of the clock on the status panel will be set to show a special verification code for the score and time. If you do manage to get this far, make a note of the code and any relevant details (ie a map and playing tips which are as extensive as possible) and send them to I RESCUED FLUFFY FROM EXILE, Amiga Power, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. We may well be able to persuade Mr Bielby to dish out some software-related prizes of some description.

THE MAIN SCREEN


The playfield.
Icons are displayed here
Time elapsed
Our hero
Score
Pass display: collected or required (not implemented)
Gun energy levels (only one is implemented in this version)
Description Display
Jetpack energy level
Health

WATCH OUT

Some things can be shot, others have to be blown up, and there are a few which can be picked up and even stored for good measure.

DOOR: **There are five different types of door found in *Exile* (but only three in this preview). The least prohibitive door simply slides open on contact. Others are locked and are only opened when the relevant switch is pressed, or are so sturdy that it takes an explosion of grenade-generated proportions to open them for good. Just for the record, the two types of door that don't feature in this preview are those which only open with the correct pass, and those which are so hard that it takes more than a grenade to blow them open.**

FIRE: **As a fitting tribute to Arthur Brown and his crazy world, *Exile* (and this preview for that matter) has pits of fire all over the shop. Needless to say, it burns – you, and other animals and objects to boot. The fire has many uses and causes all sorts of problems – examples of which are found within this preview.**

FROG: **It seems so harmless – and it is. But it also comes in handy for overcoming certain situations.**

GRENADE: **A high(ish) explosive with a reasonable range – so watch out. When a grenade is thrown or dropped it becomes live and, if left in this state, explodes after a brief countdown. A grenade can also be activated by tapping the fire button (or key) and deactivated in the same way. Players smart enough to think on their feet can grab live grenades and deactivate them before storing them away for later use.**

TRANSPORTER: **You won't know where it will take you until it does. It could transport you to a corresponding transporter, or even somewhere in the middle of nowhere. It all depends on the co-ordinates programmed into it, and they cannot be altered. Just remember that anything pushed into the transporter's beam will be transported – bullets, grenades, animals, and other objects. In some instances it's possible to turn off the beam and deactivate the transporter.**

TURRET: **Spotting one of these is easy – it shoots at anything that moves. Most turrets are too sturdy to be destroyed by gunfire (the first slow one you encounter can – there's a tip). Turrets are however temporarily stunned by repeated shots, in which state they flash. A well-placed grenade will now do the job of removing the turret from the scene. The turret gives up a power pack on its demise.**

PREHISTORIK

Publisher: Titus

Authors: Carlo Perconti (Program), Jean Christophe Allessandri (Graphics)

CONTROLS

Unfortunately there aren't any girls in *Prehistorik*, but you can help him live long enough to look for some by using the following controls:

Joystick left or left arrow key
- WALK LEFT
Joystick right or right arrow key
- WALK RIGHT
Joystick up or up arrow key
- JUMP/CLIMB LADDERS
Joystick down or down arrow key
- ENTER CAVES/DESCEND LADDERS
Joystick fire button or space bar
- USE CLUB
F10
- PAUSE/RESTART

'Prehistorik finds himself empty handed when attacked by hunger. Gifted with intelligence he sets off in search of nosh.'

Not much of a storyline, is it? Still, that's how it is in this new game from Titus. Our eponymous Neanderthal hero finds himself with a rumbling tum, and decides to alleviate the problem by going out and clubbing the entire local dinosaur population senseless (yes, he's really hungry...). Only when he's scoffed enough of them (and any other food he might happen to stumble across hidden in the caves that litter his world) to feed the whole of Czechoslovakia can Prehistorik rest easy (well, move onto the next level, anyway), and take a well-earned breather with, erm, a boxing match against a really huge dinosaur eight times his height...

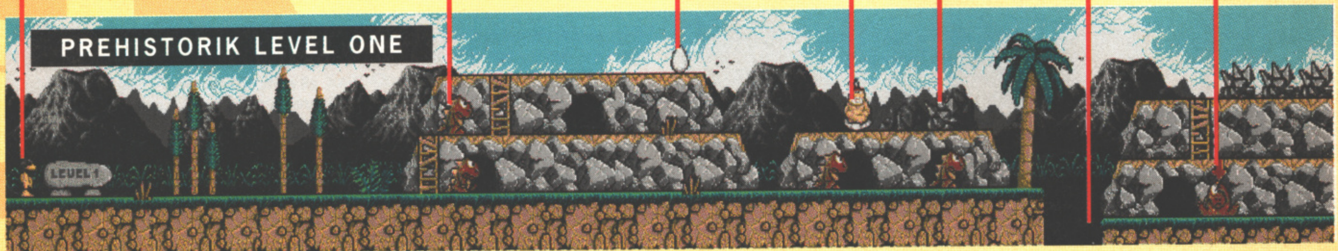
JOIN OUR CLUB

Luckily, dear hearts, you don't have to worry about the boxing. This exclusive preview contains a large chunk of the first level of the game proper, and here your objective is simply to wander along the landscape battering the living daylights out of anything you might happen across. Administering a few whacks on the head with your trusty club to any passing beasties will render them comatose, and then you simply have to walk into them and, as if by magic, you'll find them transferred to your ever-demanding stomach. Beware though – if you leave them for too long, they'll regain their senses and come after you again!

The only things you'll find that aren't for eating are jagged rocks that block your way (bash them until they crumble to dust and disappear), wooden spikes poking up into the path (jump over them), pterodactyl eggs (bonus points and extra food) and a friendly old guru who responds to a few timely clouts by giving you some useful power-up device or other (invincibility, a harder weapon, extra life etc). In the full game, you can only pass certain sections if you've collected the requisite amount of nosh (shown by the food meter at the top centre of the screen), but in this preview you don't even have to worry about that. Aren't we kind?

There are chasms to leap, caves and secret passages and rooms to explore, and all kinds of neat things, so don't just sit there reading about it – load up your cover disk and get primitive...

(And if you have yourself a fine old-time old time, you can go out to your favourite software emporium, bash the retailer over the head with a blunt instrument, and drag home a copy of the complete game by the hair anytime after the 20th of June, ie now. If, on the other hand, you'd prefer not to get arrested, then pay the nice man £25.99 for it instead. We recommend the latter option).



The name's 'Rik Prehistorik. And yes, he's the hero here.

Yum! It's a dinosaur just waiting to be beaten and eaten.

Poached, scrambled, or sunny side up – whatever your taste, this is the egg for the job.

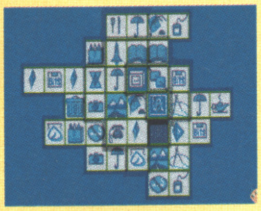
A floating ugly dude who holds a special item.

A spiky rock obstacle – hit it until it disappears.

A mighty chasm ready for the leaping...

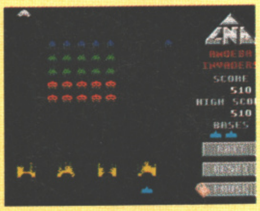
Jings! A dazed dino-sore. Touch it quick!

AMIGA POWER DISK THREE - PUBLIC DOMAIN GAMES



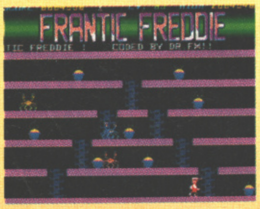
TILES

For all the people trying to obtain Activision's *Shanghai*, despair no longer. We're proud to bring you this neat little PD version. The idea of the game is to clear away all the tiles by moving them out in matching pairs. The tiles are stacked in a pyramid-ish formation (you're looking down on the pyramid from directly overhead) that is several tiles deep in the centre down to a single one on the outer layers. You can only remove tiles which can be 'slid out' from the side of the pyramid, ie those which have an empty space to their immediate left or right. (If a tile is 'higher' in a stack than the one adjacent to it on screen, it is movable, because the space beside it is effectively empty). Control couldn't be simpler – just click the pointer on the two tiles you wish to remove (they must be a matching pair), and if they are both removable, they will disappear. There are four of each kind of tile per game. Also, clicking the right-hand mouse button will allow previous moves to be taken back.



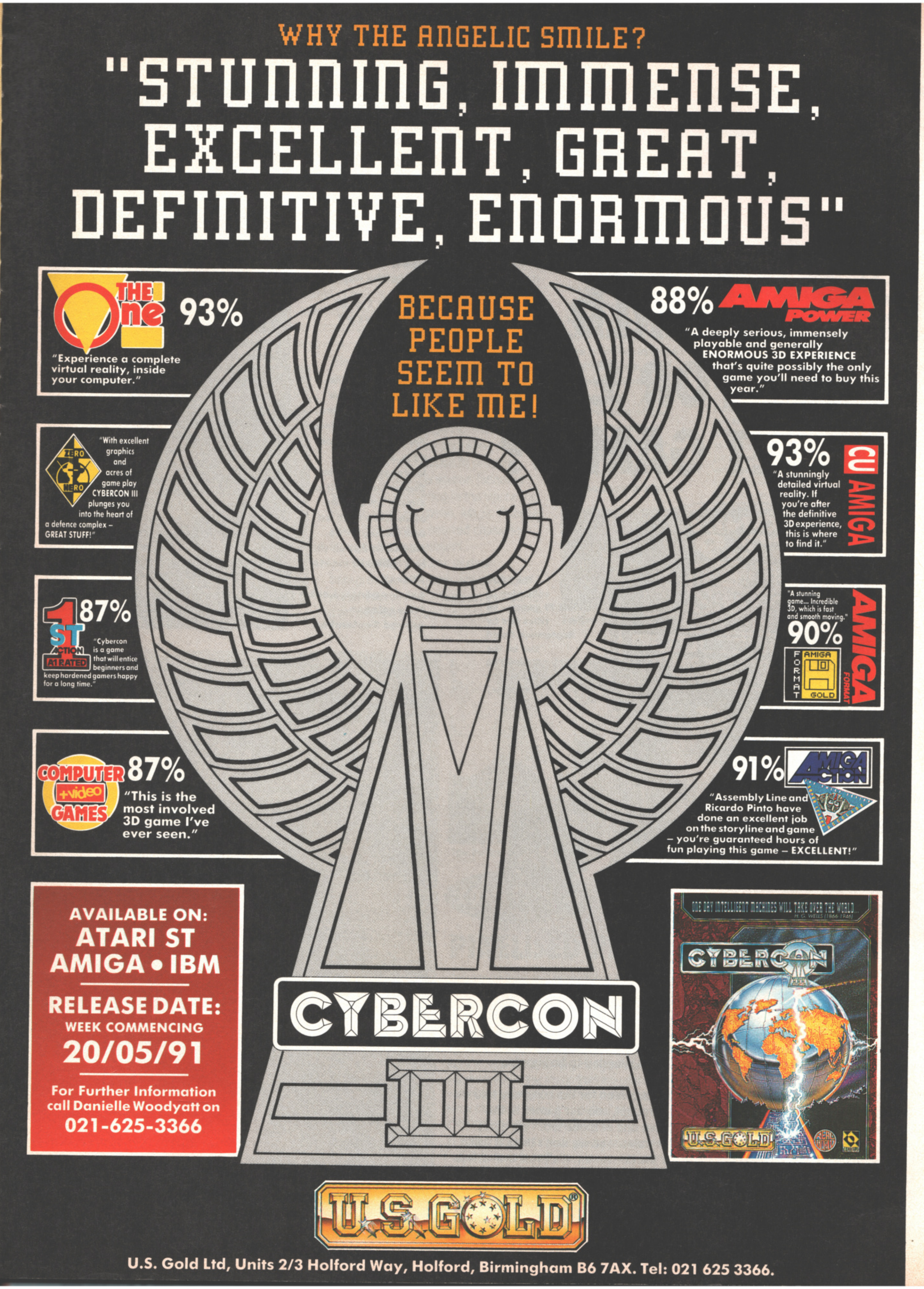
AMOEBA INVADERS

This is *the* classic arcade game, the one that really started the whole thing off, *Space Invaders*. This PD version, programmed by American team Late Night Developments, is the most faithful translation you could possibly hope to see on your Amiga. If you haven't seen the original – how old are you? – the idea of the game is to move your laser base (down there at the bottom of the screen) left and right using the joystick or keyboard (you can choose your own keys) and zapping the descending invaders before they reach the bottom of the screen. Once they get there you will have been 'invaded' and the game will be over. (The invaders descend a row when any one invader reaches either edge of the screen). If you manage to blow away all the space creeps, your reward is another screenful of them. Except this time, they start lower down...



FRANTIC FREDDIE

A version of this game was previously released on the C64 and VIC20 by Audiogenic no less than eight years ago. It's an incredibly simple but monstrously addictive platforms-and-ladders romp in which you, as blobby hero Freddie, have to collect all the treasure on each screen without being crumped by the meanies which roam the floors. Control is by joystick for up, down, left, and right movement, and the only complicated thing in the game is the climbing of ladders. Freddie has to go up the sides of the ladders, so if he wants to simply get from one side of a ladder to the other, he can't just walk straight past – he has to climb up one side of it and then go back down the other side. The meanies aren't subject to such restrictions and can drift up and down at will, so be careful not to get caught in corners! And that's all there is to it!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"This is the most involved 3D game I've ever seen."

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NEWS

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SECONDS OUT

The Prism collection of £2.99 games – 26 titles due by September. Could this be the beginning of a pocket money price war?

Prism Leisure certainly think it is – they've significantly undercut existing ranges of Amiga budget software with their 16-bit Pocket Power collection. The games, which come in little transparent plastic sleeves and are designed to be either hung from stands or wall displays on little hooks, or stacked up near the counter, are intended to be impulse purchases as much as anything.

'We're getting a terrific response,' a spokesperson for the company told us. 'Kids tend to go into a shop to buy another product, see our games at the counter, and say "Oh well, I might as well have one of these too." We don't want our Pocket Power range to hit full price sales, and we don't think it will, but obviously these are far less of a risk for the consumer. It's price that drives sales rather than product at this level.'

Indeed. You've already got 16 games out there at the moment, haven't you?

'Yes, with another 12 due on the Amiga before September.' But what titles are actually on offer? Well, we're not telling you here – it's the perfect cue to send you tripping over to page 80 where we review the bulk of them..!

CLANCY'S BACK... Fans of Tom 'The Hunt For Red October' Clancy will no doubt be eagerly awaiting Accolade's FRP interpretation of his novel, *The Cardinal Of The Kremlin.* Wait no longer – it should be out any day now!

...WHILE THESE GUYS HAVEN'T BEEN HERE BEFORE! Rather odder sounding are the new games from Demonware/Kaiko. *Mindbending Aliens From Outer Space* (!) is a sort of interactive movie, *Super Daryna* (!!) is simply an arcade adventure with an odd name, while *Ninjas In Space* (!!!) is a 'Shinobi meets Aliens' extravaganza. Look for a release around September.

ALREADY! WE'RE BRITAIN'S BEST SELLING AMIGA GAMES MAG!

In fact – though we don't have the figures at hand to prove it – we might even be the world's best seller! But let's explain the claim we can prove first...

To start with, we don't have an ABC figure yet (the only way to really guarantee what a magazine sells) and won't be able to get one until February next year – yes, they take that long. However, neither do many of our rivals. Ones that do include our market-leading sister magazine Amiga Format (81,000) and its rival CU Amiga (50,000), both of which cover lots of serious computing topics as well as games, so we can safely leave them out of the equation. Of the games only mags, Amiga Action sells 30,000 and the publishers of the new (deep breath) The One For Amiga Games claim sales of 48,000. All the others manage figures so low they're not even worth considering. And us? The first issue sold 55,000. So we're number one. (But then, it's only to be expected).

GREMLIN'S AUTUMN LINE-UP

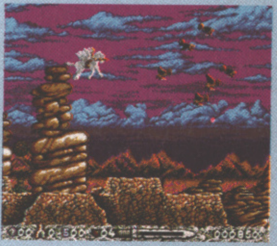
Sheffield's finest have a whole bundle of new things lined up for the second half of the year. The graphically stunning *Lil Divil* (or however you're meant to write it) still seems to have the most open-ended release date this side of *Birds Of Prey*, but there's more than enough here to make up for it...

HERO QUEST EXPANSION PACKS
(June/July)

Two of these are due five or six weeks apart. Based on elements of the expansion packs created for the original board game, each provides ten new quests set in the *Hero Quest* world for use with Gremlin's recent (and highly rated) conversion of the same game. *Return Of The Witch Warlord* will be followed by *Keller's Keep*, both at a price around the £12.99 mark.

PEGASUS
(Late July/ August)

Divided into five levels – but each of those broken up into 10 distinct stages – *Pegasus* is an epic fantasy shoot'-em-up cum arcade adventure put together by the Optimus team, last seen working for Code Masters.You play a fantasy warrior who rides a flying horse – hence the title, a working name that's since stuck. Half the game (ie 25 sections) make up a horizontally scrolling blaster where you're riding



Pretty flying horses in *Pegasus*.

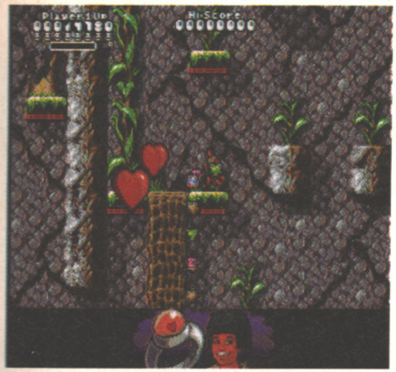
CAPTAIN PLANET

Mindscape's green superhero game, based on the successful series of Saturday morning cartoons, is coming on steadily under the guidance of industry veteran and *Bombuzal* creator, Tony Crowther.

But who, or what, is *Captain Planet*? Well, he's a recently-created ecologically sound superhero who features in stories highlighting assorted environmental threats to the planet. The plot has Gaia, the spirit of the Earth, re-awake after a long sleep to find the health of the planet under threat from an uncaring mankind. Seeking help from the children of the world, she sends five magic rings to five youngsters around the globe, taking them to a secluded island and teaching them the secrets of nature.

Each character learns a different power, associated with the elements – earth, air, fire, water, wind and a new one, heart – which when combined produce Captain Planet, a whole that (it says here) is 'indeed greater than the sum of its parts'. Various levels feature the player taking control of each of the animated pals, using their new-found skills to fight enemies and get about the place. In one section, for instance, a character grows gigantic, multi-platformed trees by sprinkling them with water from mini-clouds to provide ladders across the screen (spookily similar to a sequence in the upcoming Bitmap Brothers game, *Magic Pockets*) while another big-hearted character spreads his love around.

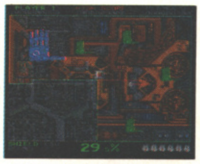
Despite the kiddie cartoon background, the game actually looks rather impressive – keep an eye out for it on release in October.



Colourful, odd: it's Tony Crowthers's *Captain Planet*.

QIX REVISITED

Remember *Qix*, the old arcade game where you've got to zoom around the screen, boxing off sections of the play area (and so turning them to your colour) with the trail you leave behind you, all the time dodging the baddies that follow along in your path? No? Well, you won't know much about the coin-op update *Volfied* then, or Empire's home computer conversion of the latter game due within the month. And no, we're not sure how to pronounce it either!



***Volfied* from Empire**

CRIB SHEETS

Continuing our series of quick guides to people, publishers, programming teams and, erm, 'other things' for people who should probably know all about them already (but don't).

No2 MIRRORSOFT

Contact: Irwin House, 118 Southwark Street, London SE1 OSW. Tel 071 928 1454

History: Formed in 1986 as an affiliate of Robert Maxwell's enormous Mirror Group. Originally concentrated on educational software, then dallied with business programs but only really became a force to be reckoned with after the move into entertainment software.

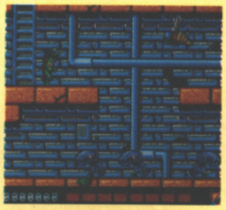
Affiliated labels: Has signed up an impressive and eclectic stable of companies from the US including Spectrum Holobyte (in which Maxwell has a stake), FTL (of *Dungeon Master* fame) and Cinemaware (which is going through a bit of a rough patch but is still churning out excellent games).

House labels: Image Works (prime licences and expensive original games); PSS (heavy duty strategy and simulations) and Mirror Image (re-released classics at budget prices, generally regarded as the best 16-bit budget label).

Greatest successes: Although it wasn't up to much on the Amiga, *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* was an enormous hit across all formats with record sales of 600,000 across Europe. Flight simulation *Falcon* was released ages ago on the Amiga and ST and clocked up sales of well over 150,000. *Dungeon Master* speaks for itself as does shoot-'em-up *Xenon 2*. Despite terrible reviews *Back to the Future II* was a surprise hit with Euro sales of 150,000.

Biggest failure: *Bermuda Triangle* was to be an enormous adventure strategy affair, and was three years in development. When it finally arrived even Mirrorsoft had to admit that it was pretty poor. The game sank without a trace.

Typical Mirrorsoft game: Over to spokeswoman Cathy Campos: 'We've so many affiliated labels that I think any games player can find something they want. Whether it be the *Turtles* for a youngster or a sophisticated flight sim like *Falcon*.'



Mirrorsoft's horribly popular *Turtles*

Typical industry comment: 'Well, they've ridden the success of the 16-bit computers admirably.'

Things to come: On the licence side it would be hard to ignore the Turtles coin-op conversion (presuming that Turtle-mania doesn't die a death). There's also top coin-op *Cisco Heat* and movie licence *Aliens III*. Original games to look out for include *Mega-lo-Mania*, a fun strategy game which is bound to score well in the charts.

Final word: Mirrorsoft is the only major British software house directly backed by publishing interests outside of the computer industry. While that hardly guarantees success, the company has secured excellent licences, is buying great games for £10(ish) re-release and can employ impressive programmers from Europe and the States. Mirrorsoft firmly believes that it is the most influential 16-bit games publisher in Europe, and many would agree. ■

on your nicely animated flying mount, the rest a *Ghosts'n'Goblins* style hack and slash affair. Graphically it's rather beautiful – just how good it is depends purely on the game design.

UTOPIA
(September)

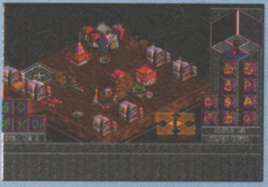
Imagine a futuristic, slightly cartoony *Sim City* viewed in a 3D isometric *Populous*-type fashion and you've got *Utopia*, a new project from Portsmouth programmers Graham Ing and Robert Crack, the men behind *BSS Jane Seymour*. Your task in the game is to get that old indefinable, the quality of life, up to 90% for the bulk of your population. There are various ways you can do this, but one might well be to do something about the bomber attacks a bunch of aliens keep making on your town!

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE 2
(Early November)

You'll notice the word 'Esprit' has been missed out this time – that's because the new program actually includes other models from the Lotus range, particularly the new open-top Elan sports car. This time the game takes a much more arcadey *OutRun* approach, with the stages being segments from a road race across America, some using the Esprit, some the slower but better handling Elan. Ten different colours of car (the variety was rather more, shall we say, limited in the original game), varying weather conditions (tunnels, rain, night, fog), a full screen display when operating in one player mode and the opportunity to link machines to allow four drivers to get in on the simultaneous action differentiate the two products. A data disk track editor will follow.

FLAG
(Christmas)

A *Populous*-style 3D isometric game (don't these seem to be the rage, all of a sudden?) from *Lost Patrol* creator Ian Harling, *Flag* tells the story of a war between two villages through various different time zones. More of a straight wargame than *Populous*, it's nevertheless promised that it'll have a 'fun, light tone.'



3D warmongering in Gremlin's forthcoming *Utopia*.

The Pixies: never coded a game in their lives.

COMPETITION

PIXELISED PIXIES

Yes, you're right, this doesn't look like a bunch of programmers (except, perhaps, for that fat one in the middle). In fact, it's top indie-rock band The Pixies. So what are they doing here? Well, 12 inch and CD versions of their recent Planet Of Sound E.P. feature a track intriguingly titled 'Theme From *Narc*', an interpretation of the music from the ultra-violent coin-op Ocean converted last year. To win a copy and hear it for yourself simply answer these simple questions.

1) **Which arcade firm originally released the *Narc* coin-op?**
2) **What was the name of the chief baddie in the game?**

The first five correct answers out of the big box in the corner marked 'Correct Answers' win themselves copies of the CD. Get to it!

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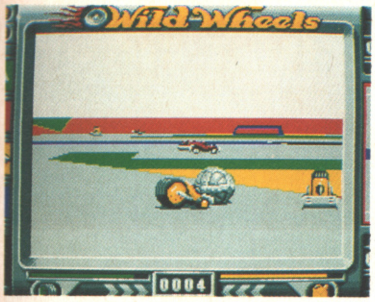
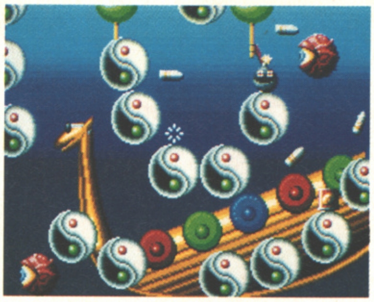


Wild Wheels: Very weird.



Wizkid: Even very weirder.

STRANGE DOINGS AT OCEAN...

Sensible Software is putting the finishing gloss on the soon to be released *Wizkid*. It's more than just another game for the small programming team, for this is the sequel to their insanely successful *Wizball* (first launched four years ago). So, what's the difference between *Wizball* and *Wizkid*? 'Well, the hero is still a fat green head with a huge smile, but now he can grow a body as well,' explains Sensible person John Home. 'It's all very weird but just as playable as the original. I think people will find it visually, erm, unusual.'

Wizkid is a collaboration between Sensible and publisher Ocean, which is also waiting for the completion of another strange game, this one called *Wild Wheels*. Programmed by Manchester team Red Rat, *Wild Wheels* can best be described as a football game between vehicles. You start off with something not unlike a Morris Minor and, if you're any good, end up with a Sherman tank.

Red Rat, which has been busily writing games for eight years, is situated just a few hundred yards from Ocean's office, but this is the first time the two outfits have actually worked together.

MAZE BLAZE

The chaps at DMA Design are beavering away on a new project code-named *Hired Gun*. It's a game in which up to four players enter a maze of different time zones, solving puzzles. If it sounds familiar then you've been watching TV's The Crystal Maze. DMA's David Jones mused: 'I suppose there are similarities.' *Hired Gun* will be ready by late autumn.

GAMES HEAVEN

Evengelsoft, a Christian charity wants to spread the good word via computer games, and is holding a competition to find the best game based on a religious theme. Cash and software prizes are being offered to the best half dozen or so entrants, and you've until the end of the year to enter. If you're interested call 081 949 2733.

ROCK-HARD QUIZ

Compiled by Gary Penn

So you reckon yourself, eh? Think you know a bit about computer and video games do you? Well get your teeth into these: five firm questions which are guaranteed to break more than the ice at parties. There are no rewards up for grabs – just the self-satisfaction of being a software swot. But can you spot the link between the five answers?

1) Activision's adaptation of James Cameron's aquatic alien action adventure.
2) *Ant Attack* author Sandy White's Private Investigator extraordinaire.
3) It was originally produced for 16 Blitz but now it can only be caught in a different form from Leisure Genius.
4) Rainbird's three-legged pest controller.
5) Ocean was the driving force behind this racey Konami conversion.

LLAMATRON (PT2)

Oops. There were a couple of errors in last month's piece on Jeff Minter's shareware game *Llamatron*. Firstly, we would like to point out that Jeff hasn't actually completed the Amiga version yet, and it doesn't look like it will be ready for some time. Jeff would also like to stress that it isn't actually available directly from him, and so when it is released, will be obtainable only from PD companies.

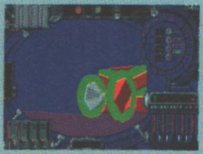
AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

It's all play and no work in the Amiga Power offices. Here are our current special favourites.

SWITCHBLADE II

(Gremlin)

What could be better than a heads-down mindless arcade platform slasharound? Nothing, that's what, and they don't come much better than this absolutely wonderful piece of hack-'em-up fun that looks more like a console game (and hence more like an arcade game) than just about anything seen on the Amiga to date. Better value than chucking 10 pees down a slot, that's for sure.



CYBERCON III

(US Gold)

Yes, we know this was in last month, but in actual fact it's only just been released. In any case, *Cybercon III* is still one of the best games you're likely to see this year – a totally involving solid 3D exploration game from The Assembly Line. Epic in every way, it's bound to keep you going for longer than almost anything else currently out there on the shelves. *Cybercon III* is a game to grow old with.

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

(US Gold)

And the same goes for this one, too. It's the *Dungeon Master* game that out-*Dungeon Masters Dungeon Master*, but it's more accessible, more varied, more atmospheric, more, well, everything really. There's something for everyone in *Eye Of The Beholder* (everyone who likes D&D games, anyway), and it'll take you almost as long as *Cybercon III* to complete.

HERO QUEST

(Gremlin)

Once you've played *Eye Of The Beholder* for a few days, you might fancy some D&Ding with a bit of a different perspective. That's where Gremlin's Amiga conversion of this popular board game comes in, providing loads of orc-baiting tomfoolery for up to four players. Perhaps slightly lacking in solo mode, it's still the best game for an Amiga and four players since *Leatherneck*.

MEGA TRAVELLER 1

(Empire)

With incredibly involved strategy games, the last thing you expect is slick presentation and a friendly user interface, but that's exactly what you get from the huge FRP game *Mega Traveller*, along with a game that gives you a better sense of 'being there' than anything we've played in ages. To call this game deep is like calling a Ferrari Testarossa a car.

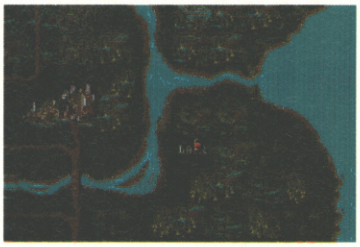
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

(US Gold)

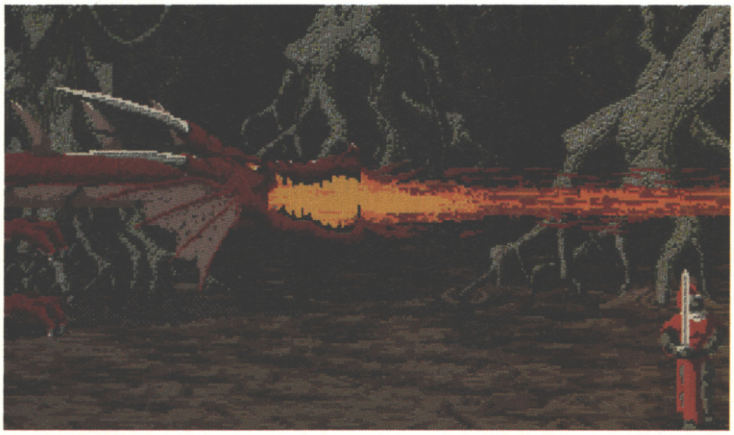
Hey, so it's not been a great few months for zap fans, it's not our fault. Scoring an unprecedented (well, for us) 90%, *Monkey Island* is the pinnacle of graphic adventuring, brimming over with atmosphere and humour, and the first Amiga game to really capture that much-attempted cinematic feel. A sea shanty to end them all.

MOONSTONE

'Gore on' and 'Gore off' are two of the odder options in Mindscape's *Moonstone* release due later this year. The action, set in a fantasy medieval world, sees you as one of four brave knights on a quest for, erm, a 'moonstone.' A fair amount of walking around, the odd sub-game, and a healthy dose of single screen hack-'em-up sequences form the bulk of the game. And the 'Gore on' option? This simply regulates the amount of blood that gets spilled in the fights – do you want to see a thin trickle or great globs of the stuff spurting all over the place? (It's your choice).



***Moonstone*'s map-based movement screen.**



In the heat of the knight. Fire-fighting, medieval style, in *Moonstone*.

Oh dear...

Yet more completely uncalled-for unpleasantness to one of the murkier blotches on the face of computer gaming.

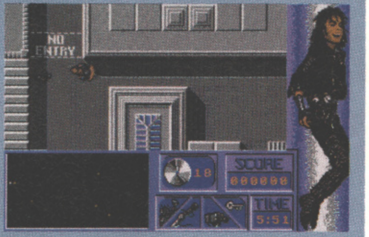
No3 MOONWALKER

(US Gold)

'A game like no other'? Well, that's certainly true enough.

Most other games don't have animation that makes the central character look like an squid with the shakes. Most other games don't have an atrociously-looped music sample that has you banging your head against brick walls within two minutes of listening to it. Most other games don't have power-ups that don't tell you when you've got them and don't tell you when they've run out. Most other games don't send you trekking around featureless grey mazes by the longest possible route in order to collect a pair of floppy ears that you walked past half-an-hour ago but weren't allowed to pick up because you didn't have your sparkly leather jacket on (we're not making this up, y'know).

Most other games don't reward you for ploughing through the utter tedium of the first level by presenting another one exactly the same immediately afterwards, except with even more ridiculously crap design features. Most other games don't have enemy graphics which look like something you'd find in your handkerchief after a particularly violent sneeze. Most other games don't look as if all the time spent on them went on the intro sequences and between-level cartoony bits rather than on any part of the actual game. Most other games aren't absolutely and totally irredeemably crap. But the very worst thing about *Moonwalker* is that it's just been re-released on a budget label, so now you'll only save £7.99 by not buying it. 'Who's bad?' asks Michael, but he already knows the answer.



Michael Jackson's *Moonwalker* – not really a top-notch 'Thriller'. If you see it – 'Beat It'.

ROCK-HARD QUIZ: THE ANSWERS

1) ***The Abyss.***
2) ***Dick Special.***
3) ***Infection.***
4) ***Verminator.***
5) ***WEC Le Mans.***

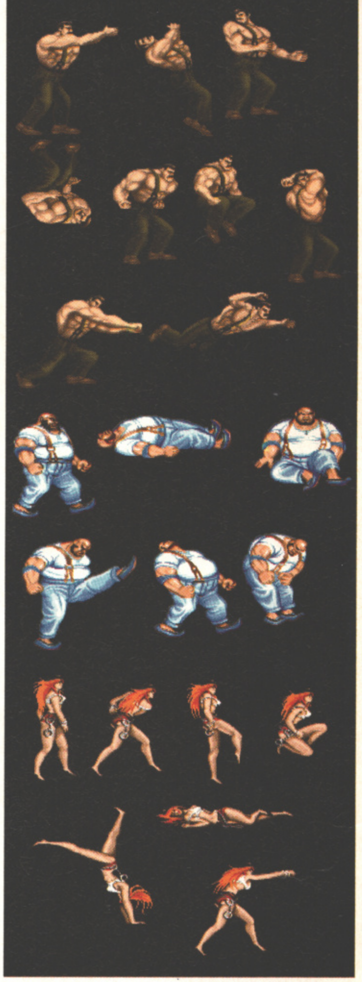
And the missing link is ... None of these titles was ever released on the Amiga, even though licences were acquired and development began.

WHERE TO ELITE? Veteran games publisher Elite is pondering a not entirely welcome change of direction. The company is looking closely at spending less time on Amiga games development and more time on writing Nintendo console games. Spokesman Scott Philips said: 'We're probably going to continue with our release plans for this year, but we have to look at the next couple of years. There hasn't been a decision yet.' However, he said that Nintendo production was cheaper and more profitable than for the Amiga. It's not all bad news. Elite is still committed to releasing an Amiga version of Tecmo's total football coin-op *World Cup '90*. Still the country's most popular arcade machine, the Amiga version will be called *European Championship 1992*. It should be ready before the end of the year and (if it's any good) it's bound to be massive.

European Championship 1992

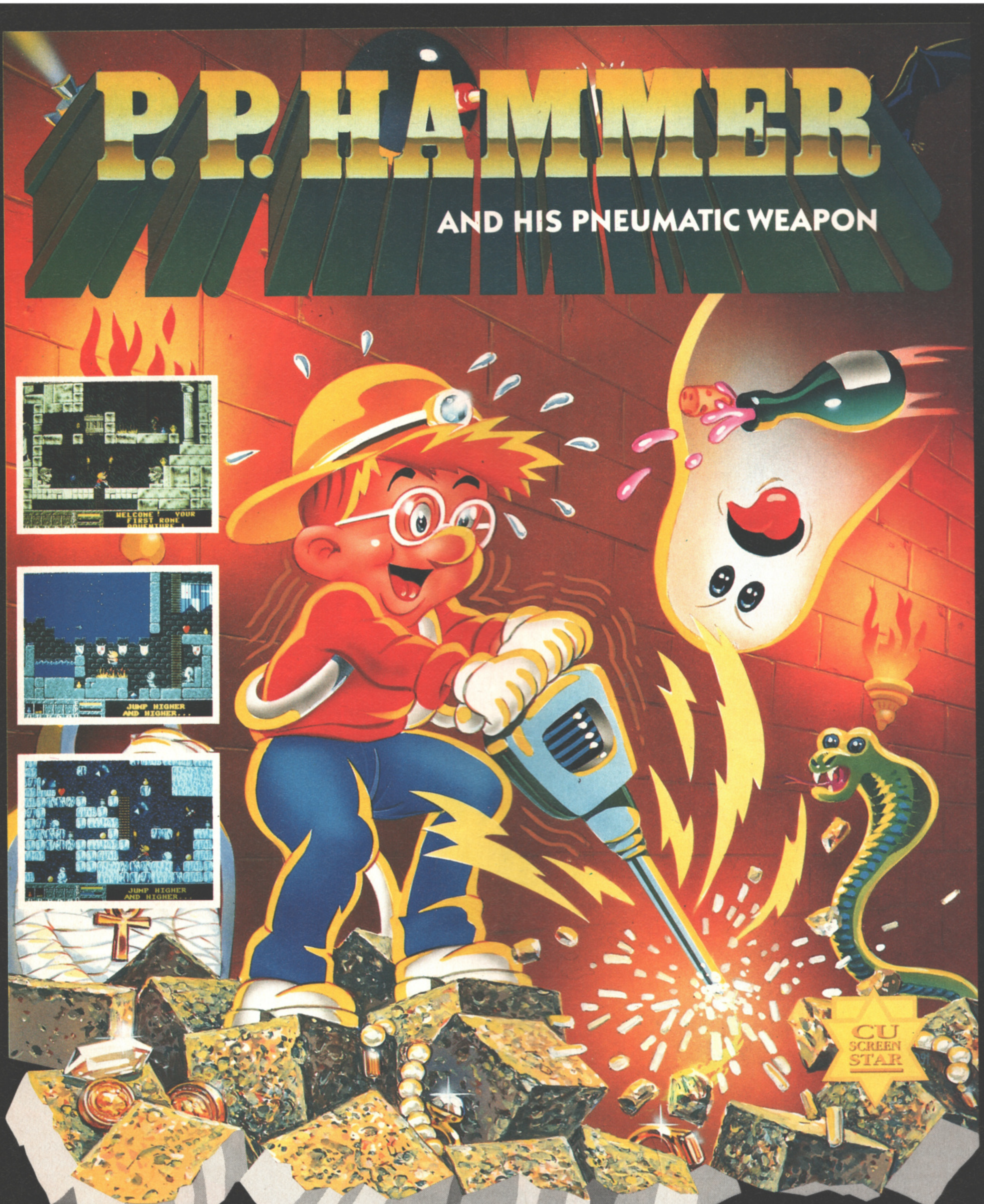
FINAL FIGHT

Creative Materials are currently putting together their conversion of the popular CapCom coin-op *Final Fight* for US Gold. The game, due for a September release, is still in its early stages, as this series of sprite screen shows.



IT'S GOING TO BE HUGE!

Oh dear. News reaches us of frantic bidding and counter bidding for what is bound to be one of the biggest licences ever. Steven Spielberg and co are soon to start making a movie based on a sci-fi book called Jurassic Park. The essential gist of book and film is of a dinosaur theme park wherein the hunky lizards turn nasty and start stomping around all over the place. The film should be out in 1993, and a huge theme park is actually being built in the United States. Although these projects are at least two years away from completion, our friends in the computer games business are already making relevant calls. Curiously, all the business bods we spoke to stonewalled as soon as dinosaurs crept into the conversation...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THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND (New entry, No 10) EYE OF THE BEHOLDER (NE, No 12)

US Gold – as far as AMIGA POWER reviews are concerned, at least – has had a pretty successful year. They have, after all, just released three of the best, highest reviewed games anyone's seen in ages, and are currently basking in the high sales they deserve. *Eye Of The Beholder* only appears in our monthly chart at No12, but it actually topped the weekly ones for a while, and being 'long shelf life' sort of a product, looks like it'll continue to enjoy healthy sales for much of the year.

***Eye Of The Beholder* from US Gold**

***Monkey Island* isn't far behind either. Here's Danielle Woodyatt of US Gold to tell us all about it... 'Yes, things are looking very good for us at the moment. The marketplace is certainly very strong on the strategy and adventure front – it seems to be the older Amiga owners who are buying the most full price product at the moment. It's nice to be publishing games that have been so widely acclaimed in the media too – you can see that by the reviews in AP and the Formats – and that offer such a high degree of variety, playability and value-for-money to the games player. With games like *Cruise For A Corpse*, the *Godfather* adventure, *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* and *Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge* due later in the year, it looks like we'll be able to keep a strong flow of high quality releases going too.**

The Secret Of Monkey Island

We're still supporting the coin-op sort of product of course, especially for the 8-bits, but I think this year's strategy/adventure line-up points strongly in the direction we're intending to go. Certainly, on a personal level, I've not felt so good about US Gold and the products we're coming out with in ages!'

HERO QUEST (NE, No 21)

Gremlin got to No3 in the Amiga weekly charts (and No 1 in the ST, for some reason) with this nicely produced introductory role-player. Sean Kelly, an ex-Your Sinclair, Zero and CU Amiga journalist, is Product Development Manager there and had this to say... 'We're very pleased with the finished product, especially as it was one we initially thought might be difficult to bring to the home computers, but in actual fact the implementation of the board game is about as good as you can get. It seems like Amiga games players agree with us too, and we expect a fairly long shelf life, especially as we have an expansion pack for it coming out soon. It features various new scenarios taken from the board game expansion packs – such as greater use of mind power, for instance – and should really help keep the high interest level up. 'In fact, *Hero Quest* points in one new direction we're intending to head in – we've got a game called *Space Crusade*, an Aliens-type space marine FRP shoot-'em-up which works in much the same way as *Hero Quest*, due for Christmas release too. This is based on another Games Workshop developed beginner's board game, but is probably a slightly more sophisticated product – you control a squad of four characters rather than an individual, for instance. Still, as far as *Hero Quest* is concerned the basic message is, as I said, that we're very pleased.'

***Hero Quest* from Gremlin**

AMIGA POWER GALLUP CHARTS

AMIGA TOP 100

***** Exceptional ***** Nearly there **** Very good *** Has its moments ** Flawed * Dire

1 (NE) ARMOUR-GEDDON/ Psygnosis £25.99 ****
2 (12) GODS/ Renegade £25.53 *****
3 (37) DEFENDER OF THE CROWN/ Mirror Image £9.99 ***
4 (1) FANTASY WORLD DIZZY/ Code Masters £6.99 ****
5 (84) CHUCK ROCK/ Core Design £25.54 *****
6 (4) PGA TOUR GOLF/ Electronic Arts £25.99 *****
7 (42) MIAMI CHASE/ Code Masters £7.99 ****
8 (3) LEMMINGS/ Psygnosis £24.99 *****
9 (95) SUPERCARS 2/ Gremlin £24.99 ****
10 (NE) THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND/ US Gold *****

11 (10) LITTLE PUFF IN DRAGONLAND/ Code Masters £6.99 **
12 (NE) EYE OF THE BEHOLDER/ SSI (US Gold)*****
13 (99) NORTH AND SOUTH/ Action Sixteen £7.99 ****
14 (14) ROCKET RANGER/ Mirror Image £10.99 ****
15 (NE) THE KILLING CLOUD/ Image Works £24.99 ***
16 (NE) SHERMAN M4/ Action 16 £7.99 ***
17 (22) NINJA RABBITS/ Micro Value £6.99
18 (2) SPEEDBALL 2/ Image Works £24.99 *****
19 (26) WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD/ Kixx £7.99 *****
20 (9) TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY/ Code Masters £4.99 ****
21 (NE) HERO QUEST/ Gremlin Graphics £25.99 ****
22 (55) STEVE DAVIS WORLD SNOOKER/ CDS £9.99 **
23 (6) FINAL WHISTLE/ Anco £12.99 ****
24 (5) SWIV/ Storm £24.99 *****
25 (NE) INTERNATIONAL KARATE +/ The Hit Squad £7.99
26 (87) MEGATRAVELLER 1/ Empire £29.99 *****
27 (49) WONDERLAND/ Virgin £30.64 ***
28 (NE) CALIFORNIA GAMES/ Kixx £7.99 **
29 (NE) BRAT/ Image Works £24.99 ***
30 (30) MOONWALKER/ Kixx £7.99 *
31 (11) POWER UP COMPILATION/ Ocean £29.99 ****
32 (NE) EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE/ CDS £24.99 **
33 (28) KICK OFF + EXTRA TIME/ Anco £7.99 *****
34 (21) DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE/ The Hit Squad £7.99 **
35 (20) R-TYPE/ The Hit Squad £7.99 ***
36 (25) F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER/ MicroProse £29.99 ****
37 (NE) CARRIER COMMAND/ Mirror Image £9.99 *****
38 (33) SPEEDBALL/ Mirror Image £9.99 *****
39 (7) VIZ/ Virgin £24.99 *
40 (15) CJ'S ELEPHANT ANTICS/ Code Masters £6.99 **
41 (16) KICK OFF 2/ Anco £24.99 *****
42 (40) PANZA KICK BOXING/ US Gold £24.99 *
43 (18) SUPER SCRAMBLE SIMULATOR/ Kixx £7.99 **
44 (46) GAUNTLET 2/ Kixx £7.99 ****
45 (13) SUPER HANG ON/ The Hit Squad £7.99 ****
46 (8) FORGOTTEN WORLDS/ Kixx £7.99 ***
47 (29) FAST FOOD/ Code Masters £6.99 ***
48 (66) LAST NINJA 2/ The Hit Squad £7.99 **
49 (27) 'NAM/ Domark £29.99 ***
50 (94) OPERATION WOLF/ Ocean £24.95 **
51(24) SUPER MONACO GP/ US Gold £25.53 ***
52 (57) STRIKE FORCE HARRIER/ Mirror Image £9.99 ***
53 (NE) THE RUNNING MAN/ Grandslam £7.99 **
54 (39) A-10 TANK KILLER/ Sierra £34.99 **
55 (32) DOUBLE DRAGON/ Mastertronic £9.99 ***
56 (63) AFTER BURNER/ The Hit Squad £7.99 *
57 (64) CLASSIC 4/ Energize £6.99 **
58 (NE) TOP CAT IN 'BEVERLY HILLS CATS'/ Hi-Tec £6.99 **
59 (NE) KULT/ Action 16 £7.99 ***
60 (NE) CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0/ Electronic Arts £24.99
61(NE) PLATOON/ The Hit Squad £7.99
62 (54) OPERATION WOLF/ The Hit Squad £7.99 ****
63 (NE) SWITCHBLADE/ Kixx £7.99 ****
64 (68) BARBARIAN 2/ Kixx £7.99 **
65 (NE) BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III/ Image Works £24.99 ***
66 (23) THE BARD'S TALE III/ Electronic Arts £25.99 **
67 (31) POWERMONGER / Electronic Arts £29.99 *****
68 (45) HONG KONG PHOOEY/ Hi-Tec £6.99 ***
69 (56) LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE/ Gremlin Graphics £24.99 *****
70 (NE) HILL STREET BLUES/ Krisalis £25.53 ***
71 (NE) MOONSHINE RACERS/ Millennium £24.99 **
72 (38) SUPER GRAND PRIX/ Code Masters £9.99 **
73 (35) FC MANAGER/ Energize £6.99
74 (50) ACES OF THE GREAT WAR/ BLUE MAX/ Mindscape £29.99 ***
75 (NE) ADVANCED FRUIT MACHINE/ Code Masters £6.99
76 (70) ROBOCOP 2/ Ocean £24.95 ***
77 (44) GALDREGON'S DOMAIN/ Players £6.99 **
78 (47) VIGILANTE/ Kixx £7.99 *
79 (41) OUTRUN/ Kixx £7.99 **
80 (19) TURRICAN 2/ Rainbow Arts £24.99 ***
81 (91) ARKANOID 2/ The Hit Squad £7.99 ****
82 (17) YOGI BEAR & FRIENDS IN 'THE GREED MONSTER'/ Hi-Tec £7.99 **
83 (NE) CHASE HQ II S.C.I./ Ocean £24.99 **
84 (34) FISTS OF FURY 2 COMPILATION/ Virgin £29.99 ***
85 (58) KAMIKAZE/ Code Masters £7.99 **
86 (NE) GARY LINEKER'S HOT SHOT/ Kixx £7.99 ***
87 (88) CRAZY CARS/ The Hit Squad £7.99 *
88 (74) TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES/ Image Works £24.99 *
89 (69) PRO TENNIS TOUR 2/ Ubi Soft £24.99 ****
90 (62) AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER/ Kixx £7.99 **
91 (51) TRACK SUIT MANAGER/ Alternative £7.99
92 (NE) FUN SCHOOL 2 (UNDER 6)/ Database £19.95
93 (52) UMS II/ Rainbird £29.99
94 (59) HOLLYWOOD COLLECTION/ Ocean £24.99 ***
95 (82) POWER PACK/ Beau Jolly £24.99
96 (43) CONTINENTAL CIRCUS/ Mastertronic £7.99 ***
97 (NE) KENNY DALGLISH SOCCER MANAGER/ Zeppelin £7.99
98 (NE) PLAYER MANAGER/ Anco £19.99 ****
99 (65) M1 TANK PLATOON/ MicroProse £29.99 ***
100 (NE) WARHEAD/ Activision £24.99 ****

THE AMIGA POWER CHARTS: HOW THEY'RE WORKED OUT

- The Amiga Power charts are put together for us by Gallup (the folk who do the BBC pop charts among many others) based on a continuing survey of sales in a wide cross section of shops up and down the country – both independent computer stores and large chains like WH Smith. As such they're the most comprehensive charts it's possible to bring you. Doing thing's so comprehensively takes time, though – the chart above relates to sales during the April/ May period.
- There's no dividing the charts into 'Budget' and 'Full Price' sections for us – we're sure you're perfectly capable of doing that for yourselves if you want to – so the list you see here includes games at every price point. This way, you can see just how important budget sales are to the overall market – at this time of year, with few big full price titles being released, very important indeed.
- Each game is rated out of five stars (five red stars for the really, really excellent ones) using the same system as in The Bottom Line, to give you some idea of how good the things that are selling really are. Games which don't get any stars aren't necessarily total rubbish – they just happen to be the ones we've never really played, so can't properly comment on. Having said that though, there has to be a reason why nobody in the office has ever found it within themselves to sit down with them, hasn't there..?

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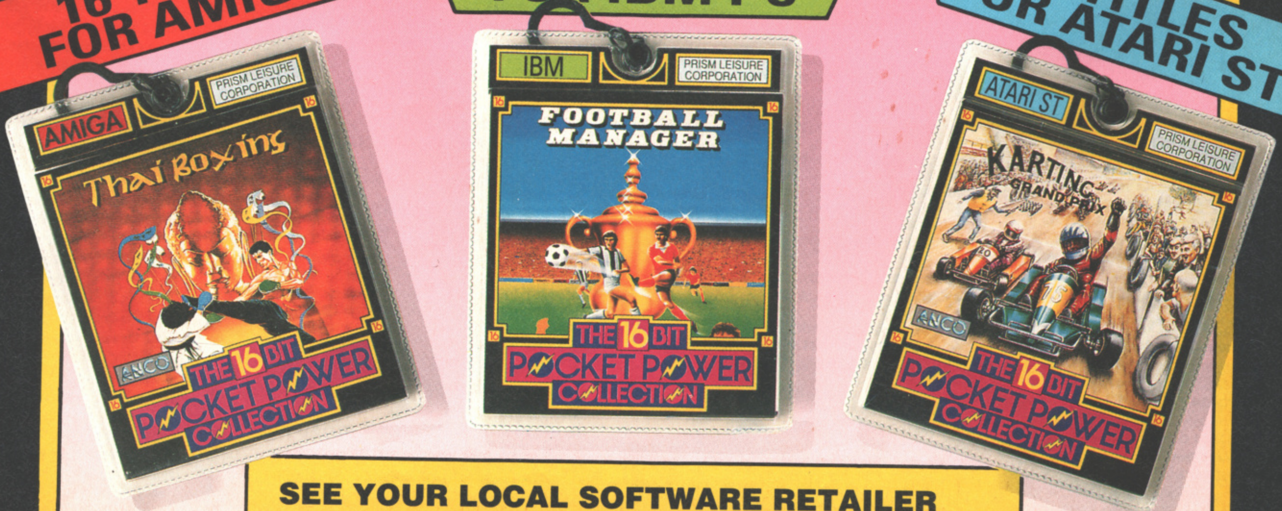
3 TITLES FOR IBM PC

13 TITLES FOR ATARI ST



AMIGA
PRISM LEISURE CORPORATION
Thai Boxing
ANCO
THE 16 BIT POCKET POWER COLLECTION
IBM
PRISM LEISURE CORPORATION
FOOTBALL MANAGER
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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY

Matt's been reviewing computer games for three and a half years now. He started life on Computer And Video Games in 1988, graduated to Your Sinclair where he quickly became editor, dabbled a bit with Zero, and then launched AMIGA POWER earlier this year. Outside of work he's into cars, boats, comics and is currently learning to ride – horses, not bikes.

Matt's been playing: *Toki* ('I'm not convinced that it's, shall we say, entirely bug free, but you can't deny it's an incredibly impressive conversion').

GARY PENN

Gary Penn's been everywhere, knows everyone, and must be a strong contender for 'most experienced computer game journalist working today.' He started life on Zzap! ('when it was good'), co-launched The Games Machine ('when it was good'), launched and edited The One ('when it was good') and currently works for AP, New Computer Express and others.

Gary's been playing: *Exile* ('It's excellent'), *Toki* ('It's a laugh'), *Spot* ('It grew on me'), *Lupo Alberto* ('It's silly') and *The Sentinel* ('It's odd').

COLIN CAMPBELL

Our brand spanking new deputy editor was, until very recently, news editor of New Computer Express, Future's weekly computer magazine. Perhaps more than anybody working in the games market, news gathering is his forte, something which we hope will become apparent over the coming months. He is also (hurrah!) a keen Amiga games player.

Colin's been playing: *The Killing Game Show* ('Because it's great fun, and I like the sequence at the start of it') and *Indy 500* ('Still!').

MARK RAMSHAW

Mark Ramshaw has been around computer games a long time (his parents run an independent computer shop in Sunderland) and started his working life singlehandedly preparing a series of monthly newsletters for the Amstrad User Group. Games-wise he's pretty versatile, mainly into FRP and flight sim-type products, as well as the odd nostalgic arcade-style bast.

Mark's been playing: *F-15 Strike Eagle II* ('It's just, like, beautiful and I'm marrying it next week'), and *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* ('I know, it's crap').

STUART CAMPBELL

Stuart – who's fast developing into the UK software industry's *least* favourite games reviewer, after the high number of low-marked reviews he's turned in lately – started life publishing the equally opinionated (but rather more obscure) fanzine 'Between Planets'. He defends his current run of harshness by saying 'it's not my fault if everything I get given to review is crap.'

Stuart's been playing: *Switchblade II* ('It looks and feels like it belongs in an arcade') and *Frantic Freddie* ('Because the music's brilliant').

JONATHAN DAVIES

Jonathan, a veteran games reviewer of Your Sinclair and (occasionally) Zero fame, remains the quiet man of the computer industry. He goes to 'Uni', lives in scenic Herne Bay, and until the arrival of Stuart was a strong contender for the position of 'harshest computer journalist that ever lived.' 'Now he's arrived though I just can't compete', he says sadly.

Jonathan's been playing: *Germ Crazy* ('But it's crap') and that's all really. ('I've been revising for my exams and doing the laundry' he says).

RICH PELLEY

Young whipper-snapper and long term YS/ Zero contributor Rich is still at school, still enjoys playing Spectrum games, and is currently showing a slightly annoying tendency to quite like, well, everything. Life for him revolves around buying straight(ish) trousers (he's finally outgrown the baggy Manchester look) and fighting off his small (very small) army of female 'admirers'.

Rich has been playing: *Super Skweek* ('It's really cuddly') and, that's about it. 'I'll play anything you give me to review really.'

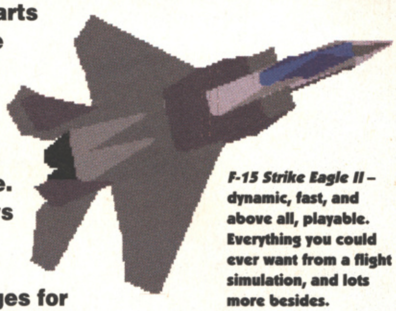
PAUL LYONS

A new face for the AP reviewers, Paul used to review restaurants for Time Out in London, and until recently worked as technical editor on Future's subscription only MacPublishing magazine. Recently attached to Amiga Format (in an as yet unspecified sort of role), he's particularly interested in serious strategy games – a boon as the rest of us hate them!

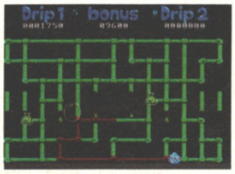
Paul's been playing: *Railroad Tycoon, UMS II* ('It's the most complete strategy game yet, though terribly unfriendly') and *Cohort*.

GAMES

Welcome to the section they're all calling the, erm, 'Games Review' section. This summer, as ever summer, the number of *really* top-notch, high quality, big name games released starts to tail off a bit – we only really felt six games deserved the in-depth front end treatment this month, for instance. It's not all bad news though – for the first time we've gone up to four pages for individual reviews (*F-15 Strike Eagle II*, starting overleaf, and *Toki*, page 26). Is this a good idea? In fact, would you like to see five page reviews of the odd really, *really* good release? (Why not write in now and let us know?) Also new is a Public Domain review section (starting on page 85) to compliment our budget reviews (page 80) and the remainder of the full price stuff (page 86). Finally, there's The Bottom Line – close to 300 mini reviews of the major releases of the last year. In a nutshell, AMIGA POWER's flexible reviewing system allows everything the space it needs, from a couple of sentences on an old game to four pages (do we hear a vote for five?) on the likes of *F-15 II*. If there's a better way to do games reviews, we haven't thought of it yet.



***F-15 Strike Eagle II* – dynamic, fast, and above all, playable. Everything you could ever want from a flight simulation, and lots more besides.**



The PD invasion continues. Pictured is *Drip*, old-fashioned and proud of it.

THE SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS)

Here, if you will, is a brief guide to our reviewing 'philosophy':

1) We don't believe in over-rating games – in fact, we're generally incredibly strict about the whole business of giving out marks. It's not because we think it's big or clever to be deliberately nasty either – it's that we always keep in mind that you're being asked to cough up 25 quid or so, and for that you deserve *a lot* of entertainment.
2) We don't believe in over-complicated rating systems. Generally they just draw attention away from the review, get in the way, and fail to tell you anything interesting about the game. That's why we only run with one simple mark out of 100 and short 'Uppers' and 'Downers' comments on the game – they give you the bare bones of our opinion, but if you want to know more you're going to have to read the review...
3) Most of the time we'll agree about a game – but sometimes we won't. That's when the On The Other hand... boxes come into play, a home for the (sometimes very different) opinion of a second reviewer.
4) And that's about as far as it goes.

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

The trend for flight simulations shows no signs of stopping. Now MicroProse have

Game: F-15 Strike Eagle II
Publisher: MicroProse
Price: £34.99
Author: Adrian Scotney, Tim Walters, Mark Scott, Dave Lowe
Release: Out now

Y'know, when I was a kid, my one big dream was to join the air force. I yearned for the thrill of launching jet fighters from aircraft carriers, pulling stunts at several thousand feet, zooming into dog fights and so on. Now, after playing *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, I'm glad I didn't enroll. There's no telling how many of the RAF's very expensive planes I would have destroyed by now (or how many bones I would have broken). Going by my performance on the Amiga, it'd be quite a few.

Mixing the speed and playability of *F/A-18 Interceptor* with the depth of more contemporary airborne blasts such as *Falcon* and *F-19 Stealth Fighter* (which bares more than a passing resemblance to this program, and was actually programmed by the same team), *F-15 II* is a very serious attempt to bring the art of flying to the masses. The phrases 'user friendly' and 'fun to play' were obviously etched into the programmers' brains from the very beginning, as *F-15 II* offers the most accessible route to the skies yet given to Amiga owners.

> **'What it really offers is lashings of hit-and-run missions'**

Okay, I know what you're thinking. There have been oodles of flight sims already – just what makes *F-15 II* different to (and supposedly better than) the rest. And, more particularly, just what makes it so different to *F-19*? After all, they both look quite similar and they were programmed by the same team. What's in it for the games player? Well, the answer is 'quite a lot actually', as we shall see.

For a start let's take a brief look at *F-15 II*'s history. Released nearly two years ago on the PC, it was originally programmed in C. Now C, while being a perfectly respectable language, can never compete with the sheer bat-out-of-hellness of machine code. And so when MicroProse UK got the source code from their Stateside buddies, a rethink was in order. A simple port onto the Amiga would leave the program with serious speed problems. To get the whole thing flying around as fast as the PC version, a complete re-write was needed.

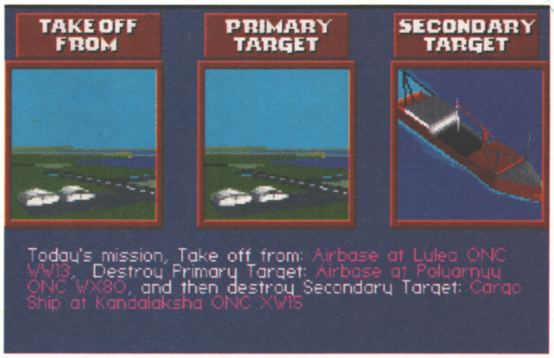
And that's what happened. MicroProse UK got Adrian Scotney and Tim Walters (the guys responsible for *F-19*) to take the game design and re-write it

EARNING MY WINGS

One hour into my training, and I've decided to embarrass myself in front of the world. Take a trip with me and my trusty chunk of steel they call the F-15, on a peace-loving mission to reduce several things to dust. It's a dirty job, but you know the rest.

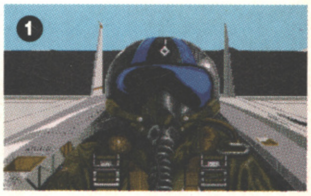
Okay, here we go. I've selected pilot level, which means I get the opportunity to take off. Any hostiles encountered will be pretty aggressive.

I've selected the North Cape as my battleground. This means lots of snow in them there hills. Onto the mission briefing, and then time to fly.

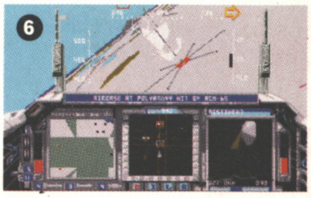


Today's mission, Take off from: Airbase at Lulea ONC WW13. Destroy Primary Target: Airbase at Polyarnyy ONC WX80, and then destroy Secondary Target: Cargo Ship at Kandalaksha ONC XW15

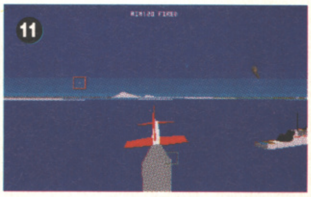
Here're the mission details. Knock out an enemy airbase at Polyornyy (wherever the hell that is), then take out a cargo ship at Kandalaksha. No problems.



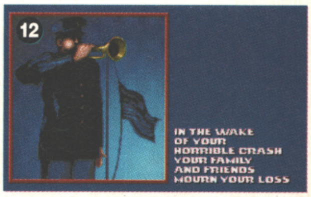
Here we go then. Start her up, taxi to the end of the runway and wait for the word from the tower.



Bullseye! One less enemy post to deal with. The smoke rises, as I prepare myself for the next target.

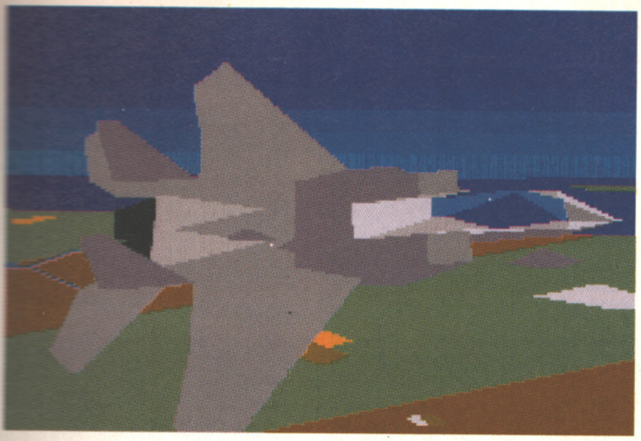


Yikes. I had the wrong missile type selected. It cruises off into the sunset.



IN THE WAKE OF YOUR HORRIBLE CRASH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS MOURN YOUR LOSS

The shock is all too much, and I, well, sort of crashed the F-15 into the sea. Whoops.



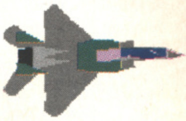
Considering the number of polygons present in a typical scene from *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, the speed and relative fluidity of the action is pretty astonishing.

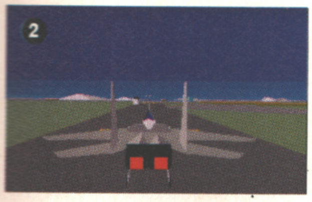
specifically for the Amiga, in machine code. The result is nothing short of astounding. Even with several bucket-loads of ground detail and the odd plane on the screen things still move quite respectably fast. Couple this a genuine 'feel' of flight, and some remarkable action sensibilities and the result is at least as good as, and in many ways better than, anything we've seen so far. Well, that's the idea anyway.

Before I continue with this review, I just want to emphasise that I am writing from a game player's point of view, not that of an aircraft fanatic. When I load up a game on the Amiga I want to enjoy it – real life authenticity is not really my concern. If that's in there too, all the better, but I need a high degree of arcade-style speed and thrills to get my kicks.

How nice, then, that the programmers seem to have catered directly for me. They've gone all out for speed and smoothness with the graphics, which (while great) does mean that *F-15 II* sacrifices more of the realism of flight than some other sims. Whether this is a good idea is open to debate – I've heard arguments both for and against – but I'd tend to side with the idea that, at the end of the day, an Amiga flight sim is a game, and so should play accordingly. The argument against says that the sim should be made as realistic as possible, and then tweaked to make it more playable, but that the actual realism should be enough to make it enjoyable. Clearly, because a humble machine such as the Amiga could never reproduce both the graphics *and* the flight mechanics of half-million quid simulators, there's going to have to be some compromise somewhere along the line, and I know where I'd like to see it made. (And anyway, I've never flown a →

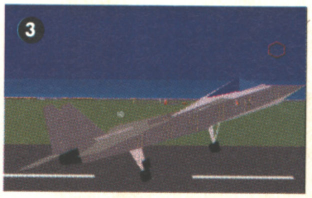
released what could just be the best, and friendliest, flying thrill yet.





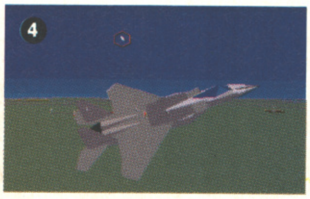
2

You are cleared for take off. Yahoo. Let's go. Rev that engine and burn that fuel (or something).



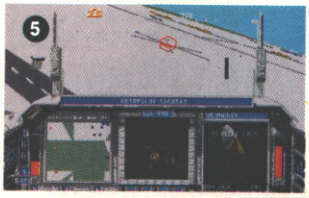
3

Wow, what a perfectly executed take off! (I was destined to be with this aircraft).



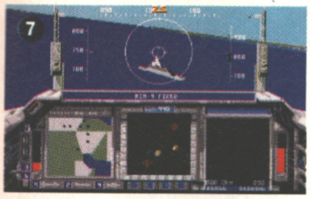
4

And we're away. Time to lock onto that waypoint, and arm those air-to-ground missiles.



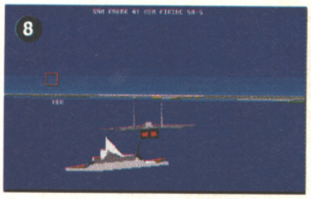
5

Closing in on the enemy airstrip. Missile locked in. Time to launch. (Exciting, isn't it?)



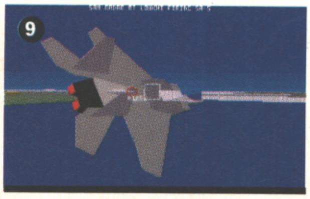
7

That didn't take long. The ship is in my sights. Time to arm a missile, and blow that sucker away.



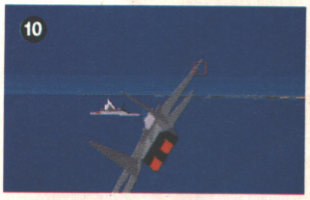
8

Mmm. There's nothing quite like an nice external view to make your heart skip a bit. (How's that for a cool view?)



9

Oops. I got a bit carried away, and forgot to launch a missile. Better turn round and try again.

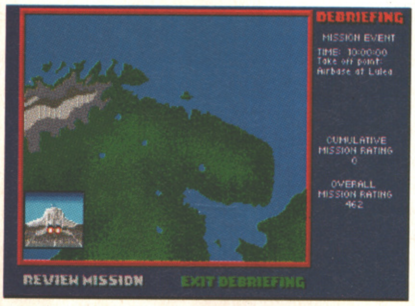


10

Right, here we go. This is the big one. I'm going in nice and low, I can't possibly miss. (What a hero).

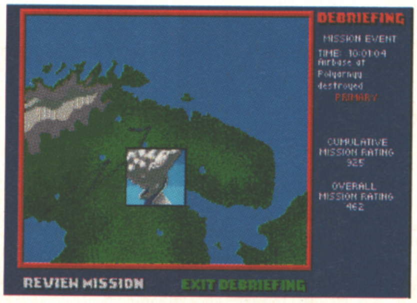
DEBRIEFING SCREENS

Time to review my performance. Not the most accomplished mission ever, but I guess you've got to begin somewhere.



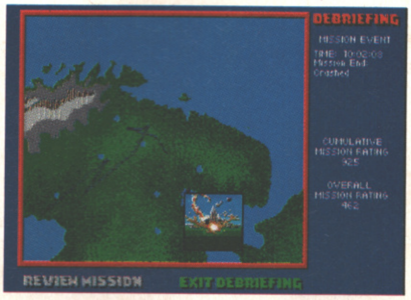
DEBRIEFING
MISSION EVENT
TIME: 10:00:00
Take off point:
Airbase at Lulea
CUMULATIVE
MISSION RATING
0
OVERALL
MISSION RATING
462

That's where I launched from. A perfect start to a bad day. On to incident two.



DEBRIEFING
MISSION EVENT
TIME: 10:01:04
Airbase at
Polyarnyy
destroyed
PRIMARY
CUMULATIVE
MISSION RATING
925
OVERALL
MISSION RATING
462

That's the bit where I annihilated the airbase. What a guy. The pride of the air force. Top Gun, etc.



DEBRIEFING
MISSION EVENT
TIME: 10:02:08
Mission End:
Crashed
CUMULATIVE
MISSION RATING
925
OVERALL
MISSION RATING
462

And, that's where I crashed. What a schmuck. (Anyway, I always wanted to be a lumberjack).

real F-15, and so probably wouldn't know if it was super-realistic or not anyway).

The core of *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is a very rigid mission system. Once you've selected your arena (from Vietnam to the Middle East, the choice is yours) and the level of difficulty, the game will dream up a new mission for you. These consist of a take-off point, a primary target to neutralise (ie blow the hell out of), and a secondary target to duff up. Complete these objectives, get your plane back to base intact, and bob's your uncle. One completed mission, lots of praise, and more girls than you can handle (sexist, moi?). Then it's just enough time to shout 'Smoke me a kipper', before taking to the skies once more. It's the perfect channel of aggression for all Amiga pacifists.

In addition to the usual bits and pieces to make you 'feel like you really are there' (or something), *F15 II* also includes a number of handy features which are great to muck around with – some of them even have a use too! In addition to the four cockpit views and there're also enough external camera options (each with a zoom facility) to keep David Puttnam happy. Both the radar and map detail can be enlarged or reduced, and of course there's the usual range of missiles to choose from (well, short, medium and long range actually). Chaff, flares and afterburners are also fitted as standard on the MicroProse model of the F-15, as are target and waypoint selectors (the HUD system helping out with locating the things in question).

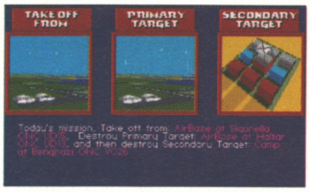
'A damn fine flight simulator. Perhaps the best yet.'

There're also a number of options to make life just that little bit easier for the beginner. The auto-pilot comes in very handy for instance, especially when landing is still a bit of a hit-and-miss (or should that be crash-and-burn?) affair. And there's no need to worry about such banalities as flaps. Even landing gear control is optional. This *is* just a game after all. Selecting the Rookie difficulty setting even eliminates the hassle of the taking off (not that it was particularly hard in the first place). Some top guns out there may miss these little elements of realism, but I certainly don't – remembering to retract

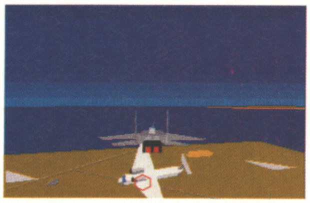
THE MISSIONARY MAN

***F-15 Strike Eagle II* offers six playgrounds of war. Each scenario challenges the pilot in a different way, from the overt dogfighting of the Middle East, to hit and run tactics in the North Cape. Here's a selection of example missions, and an accompanying mid-flight shot, just to give you an idea of what to expect.**

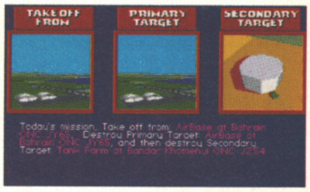
LIBYA
Across The Line Of Death



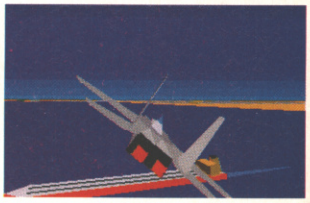
Today's mission, Take off from: AirBase at Sigonella ONC UD15, Destroy Primary Target: AirBase at Halfar ONC UD13, and then destroy Secondary Target: Camp at Benghazi ONC VC26



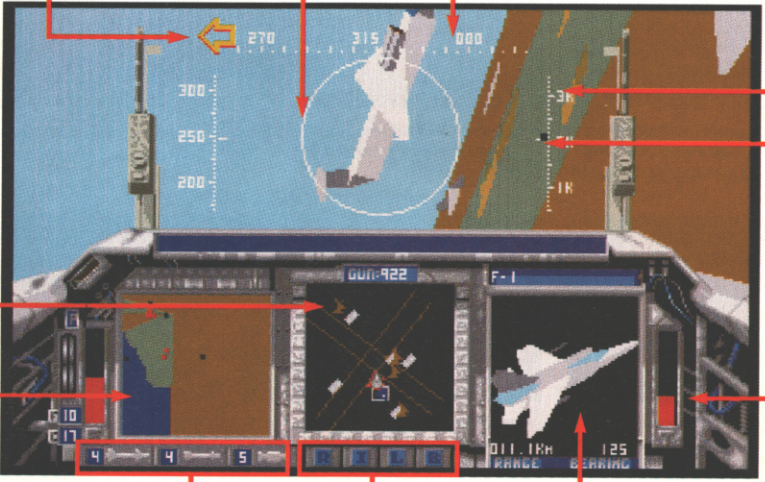
PERSIAN GULF
Keeping The Sea Lanes Open



Today's mission, Take off from: AirBase at Bahrain ONC JY65, Destroy Primary Target: AirBase at Bahrain ONC JY65, and then destroy Secondary Target: Tank Farm at Bandar Khomenyi ONC JZ54



WHAT DOES WHAT



This is the waypoint indicator. It simply shows the correct direction to the next target.

The circle on the HUD display is the missile envelope. To target a hostile it must be contained in here.

The rolling compass shows the current heading in degrees (of course). This, coupled with the waypoint indicator and maps, is all a pilot needs to navigate the world.

The altitude indicator is always one to watch. Don't go below 200ft!

The close up map offers zoom and also indicates major targets etc.

Any bar above or below the centre line indicates the angle of elevation.

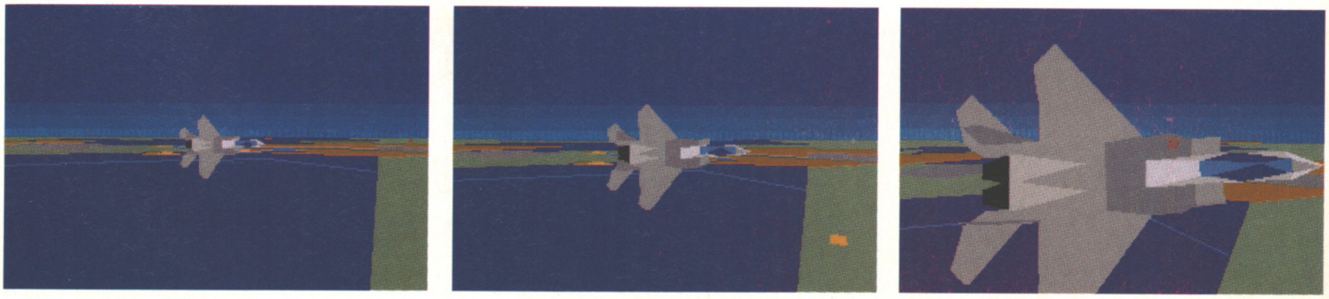
The main map displays major land forms, plus friendly and enemy bases etc.

Check your thrust here. Max can only be achieved with the use of after-burners.

The weapons level indicators. Plenty of short, medium and long range missiles here, as you can no doubt see.

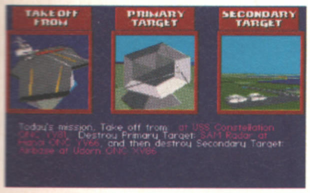
This little row of icons indicates what tracking systems any incoming missiles are using, and consequently what action should be taken (eg letting a flare or some chaff fly).

The ever-so-clever F-15 computer displays a constantly moving 3D model of what is currently targeted, and even gives you its bearing and range.

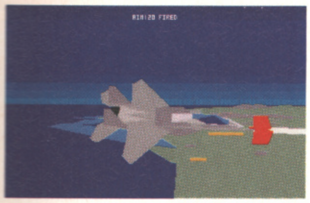


Taking a closer look always makes things seem more impressive. From big, to bigger, to biggest, *F-15 II* is as easy as one-two-three.

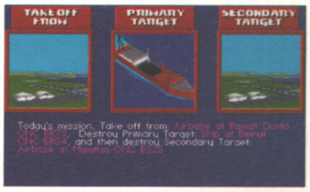
VIETNAM
The Longest Air War



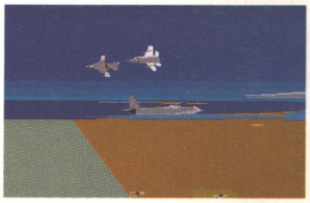
Today's mission. Take off from: at USS Constellation ONC YV81. Destroy Primary Target: SAM Radar at Hanoi ONC YV66, and then destroy Secondary Target: Airbase at Udorn ONC XV86



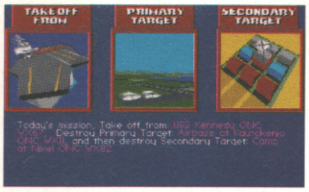
MIDDLE EAST
Eagles vs MiGs



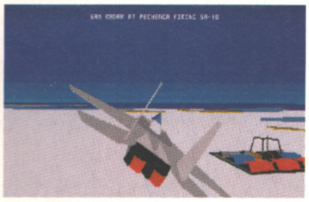
Today's mission. Take off from: Airbase at Ramat David ONC ER23. Destroy Primary Target: Ship at Beirut ONC ER54, and then destroy Secondary Target: Airbase at Malatya ONC ES25



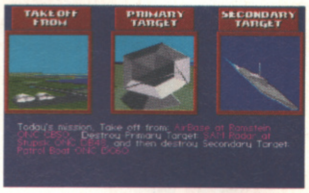
NORTH CAPE
Into The Soviet's Backyard



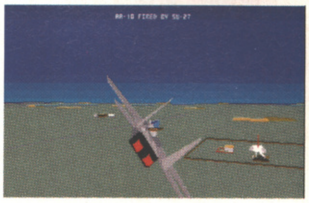
Today's mission. Take off from: USS Kennedy ONC WX67. Destroy Primary Target: Airbase at Kautokenio ONC WX11, and then destroy Secondary Target: Camp at Nikel ONC WX82



CENTRAL EUROPE
Red Storm Raging

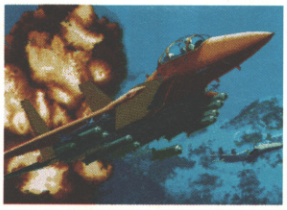


Today's mission. Take off from: AirBase at Ramstein ONC CB50. Destroy Primary Target: SAM Radar at Stupsk ONC CB48, and then destroy Secondary Target: Patrol Boat ONC DC60



my landing gear immediately after taking off has never really seemed like the most essential or exciting element of a flying game to me anyway. To my mind *F-15 II* has a perfect balance.

Of course all these features are almost standard in the field of Amiga flight sims these days, it's the look and feel department which can make or break a sim. *F15 II* triumphs here, with the by far and away the best graphics, and as close a representation of flight as I could ever want. Even the sound is impressive, with an engine whine which reacts perfectly to the movement of the plane, and some satisfying samples. I particularly loved the shout of 'Bullseye' when a target is finally destroyed.



A gratuitous shot of the title screen, simply because it's so beautiful.

Forget any pretensions to recreating the total flight experience (although *F-15 II* really is quite remarkable in this respect). What it really offers is lashings of hit-and-run missions, with a fair old number of dogfights in there for good measure. This balance of air-to-air combat and destruction of ground targets, coupled with the enormous play area, makes for a game with real longevity. Despite that fact that at first the missions may not seem particularly varied (all missions I've played so far adhere to the formula of knocking out two ground targets), it's only when you actually get up in the air that you fully appreciate the feel and variety of this game. It really is impossible to experience the same mission twice. Had *F-15 II* concentrated solely on the air-to-ground strikes then I would have probably tired of it fairly quickly. As it is, I always find my blood lust getting the better of me, and seem to get totally wrapped up trying to shoot down MiGs.

Don't get me wrong though. Despite the more arcade-based nature of the thing, it's still bloody hard. It took me nigh on an hour of flying before I actually made a kill (unless you count one occasion when I accidentally had the auto-fire on, and knocked out a whole of load of allied planes). Okay, I admit it, I'm probably just crap at these games, but hey, you've got to begin somewhere.

Still, a little practice goes a long way, and as the hours tick by, the old flying instincts come to the fore. It's not long before the most spectacular manoeuvres become second nature, and knocking out a radar base without even resorting to missiles doesn't seem quite so daunting after all. The learning curve can be all important with these flight thingies, and thankfully *F15 II* gets it just right.

Having played the game quite some time now, I still haven't gotten anywhere near proficient at it. Sure, I can take out the occasional enemy fighter, and bomb the required targets at least fifty percent of the time. But I still find it a challenge (and I haven't even dared move up to the harder levels yet). While I wouldn't rate it as the best game I've ever played, it could well be the one I come back to most. And I wouldn't hesitate in recommending it as a damn fine flight simulator. Perhaps the best yet. •

MARK RAMSHAW

△ **UPPERS** Solid 3D graphics with that added 'woosh'. Just like a hole in the ozone layer, *F-15 Strike Eagle II* will take your breath away. Visually, it's the closest you're likely to get to Top Gun.

▽ **DOWNERS** Despite the overt arcade nature of things, it will still go over some people's heads. Even dedicated Tom Cruise types may wonder if it's worth the asking price, when *F/A-18 Interceptor* is available for a tenner. 1 meg only rears its ugly head yet again.

THE BOTTOM LINE

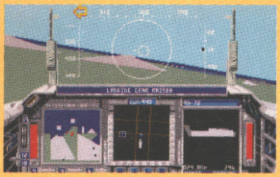
Another one destined to join the ranks of all-time classics. If you've ever dreamt of flying, *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is a must.

87 PERCENT

TOTALLY OUT OF YOUR HUD

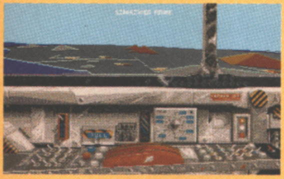
No simulation of the F15 would be complete without the Heads Up Display. This wonder of modern technology is a computerised overlay on your cockpit view, providing essential information for the pilot about town (or air-space even).

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

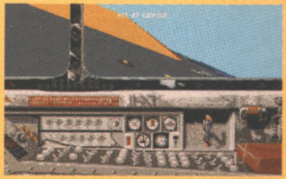


1. FRONT VIEW (with or...

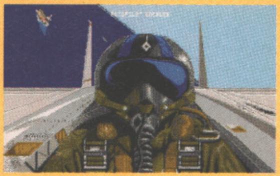
... without cockpit)



2. LEFT VIEW

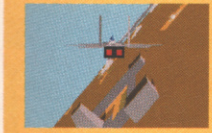


3. RIGHT VIEW

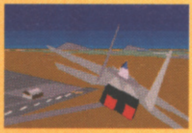


4. REAR VIEW

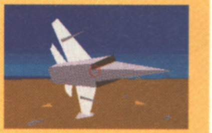
AND OUTSIDE THE COCKPIT



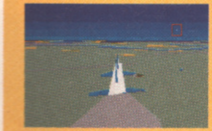
5. SLOT VIEW



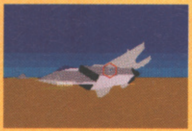
6. CHASE PLANE VIEW



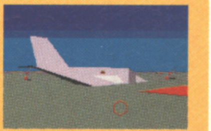
7. SIDE VIEW



8. MISSILE VIEW



9. TACTICAL VIEW



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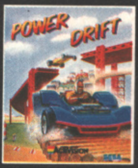
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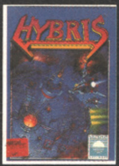
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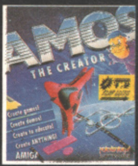
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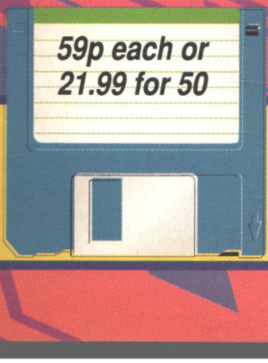
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TOKI

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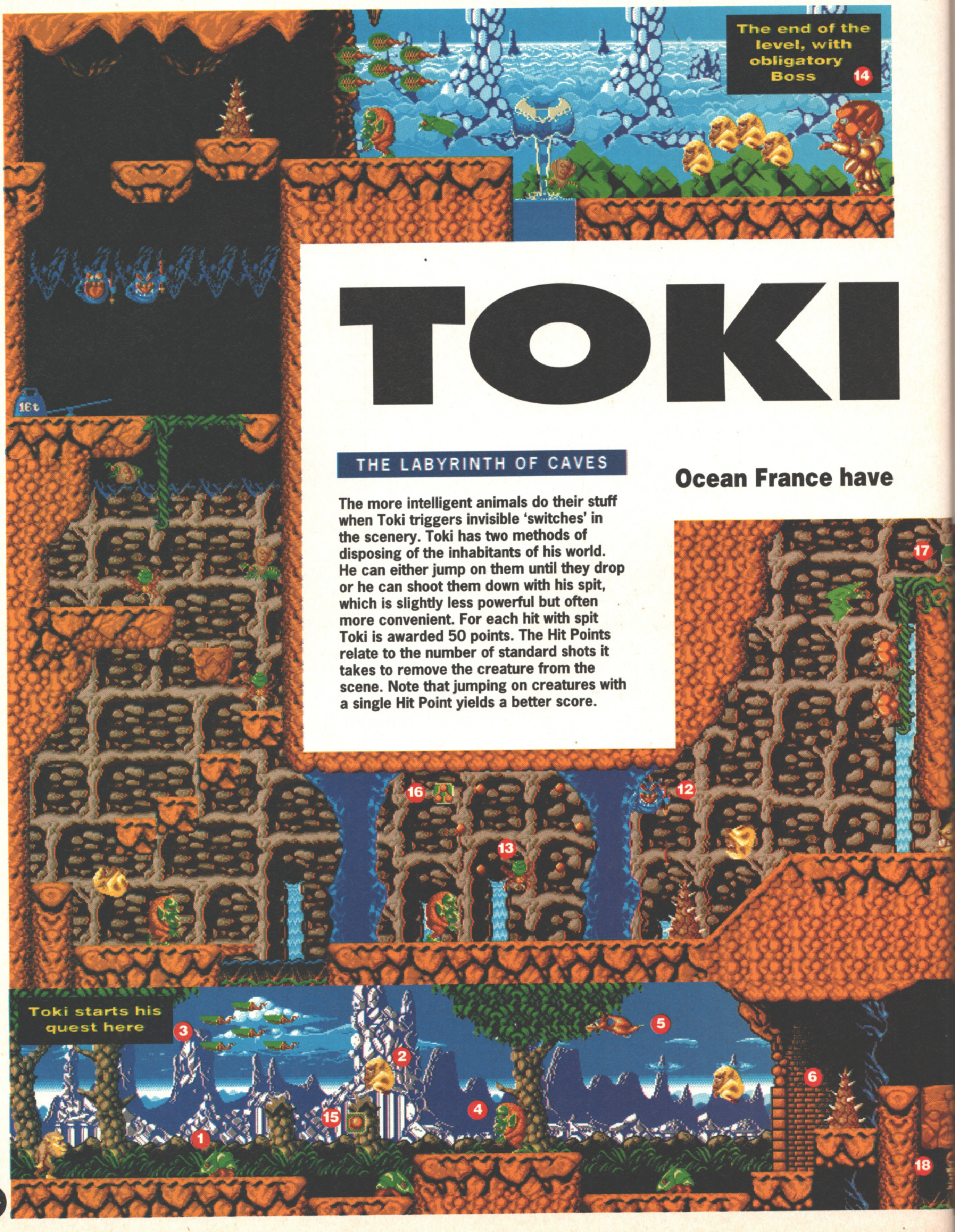
The end of the level, with obligatory Boss 14
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16
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Toki starts his quest here
3
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6
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15
1
18

THE LABYRINTH OF CAVES

The more intelligent animals do their stuff when Toki triggers invisible 'switches' in the scenery. Toki has two methods of disposing of the inhabitants of his world. He can either jump on them until they drop or he can shoot them down with his spit, which is slightly less powerful but often more convenient. For each hit with spit Toki is awarded 50 points. The Hit Points relate to the number of standard shots it takes to remove the creature from the scene. Note that jumping on creatures with a single Hit Point yields a better score.

Game: Toki
Publisher: Ocean
Price: £25.39
Authors: Michel Janiki, Philippe & Lionel Dessoly (graphics),
Pierre Eric Loriaux (music & sound FX)
Release: Out now

Why is it that arcade machines such as Mitchell's *Pang*, and Taito's *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands, Plotting* and *The New Zealand Story* don't become popular until they are converted to the home machines? It'd be understandable if they were dogs. But no – not only are they well-crafted and extremely playable, even top game designers find them an invaluable source of inspiration. Maybe these corky coin-operated releases simply aren't suitable fodder for arcade-goers who demand short, sharp thrills to get them hooked. Oh, I don't know. And I don't really care, just so long as they keep 'em coming.

Toki's another one of those run 'n' jump romps, there's no denying that. What makes it stand out from the rest of the whoop is the fact that it's such a well-rounded piece, with all its learning curves in the right places and some neat features to boot. It's real pretty too, not to mention smooth. No expense has been spared with the colour, and combined with the layer of parallax for the background a healthy arcade feel is created. (Having said that, all this is more testimony to Ocean France's conversion skills than the quality of the Tad Corporation's coin-operated original).

And so to the plot, which doesn't offer anything new, that's for sure. A boy, Toki, meets a girl, Miho, and they fall in love. Aaah. Enter the evil wizard Bashtar. Now, Bashtar has the hots for Miho. Oooh. His big blue magic hand picks up *Toki*'s missus and steals her away, along with *Toki*'s manhood...

No, it's not what you're thinking – before Bashtar does a runner he knocks Toki down to the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder by turning him into an ape. Booo. But this chimp's no chump. He's still man enough to retrieve his true love (and his original form for that matter) and give Bashtar the bashing he deserves. Why, it's almost a scrolling *Donkey Kong* in reverse.

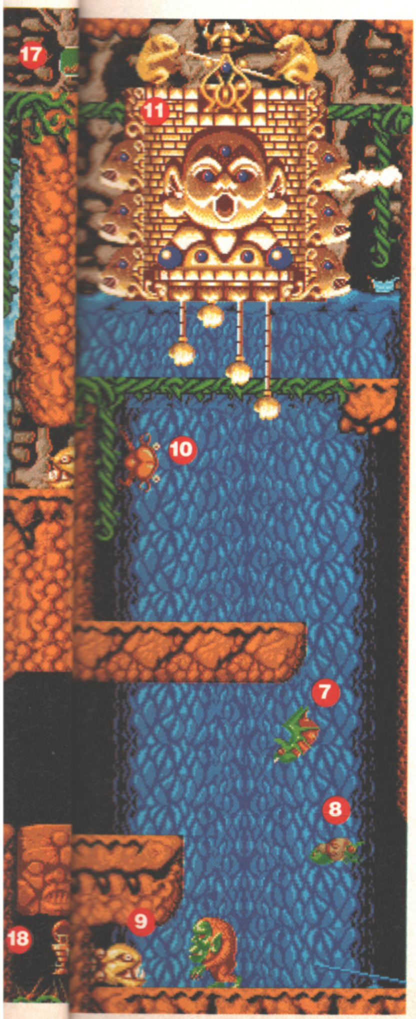
Believe it or not, being an ape does have its advantages. *Toki* has new-found versatility and a range of facial expressions which exceeds that of most actors. He walks. He jumps (and can be manoeuvred while he's in the air). He crouches. He climbs. He swims. He swings. He instinctively ducks to allow him to crawl through narrow gaps. He curls up into a ball and covers his head when he gets dobbered. And, best of all, he spits glowing balls in eight different directions (and he even gets a grobbly together before he gobs), which comes in handy for removing the wildlife from his world. *Toki*'s pucker power can be boosted too, though this is more convenient than essential.

What's there is so good, that there should be more if it.

The ape's remarkable repertoire, along with the aforementioned arcade feel and the lush parallax-scrolling scenery (the underwater section especially – oh, and the dark forest's snowy stuff, and the waterfall), are just three of the Tasty Titbits in my *Toki* Top Ten. The other seven are as follows ...

- Time limit permitting, you can scroll around the environment to your heart's content. This also proves useful when it comes to disposing of creatures or avoiding their projectiles.
- Restart positions are plastered all over the shop, so when *Toki* loses a life, play is always resumed near the point of death (well, unless it was his last life and the CONTINUE option is used, in which case he goes all the way back to the beginning of the level).
- Sound and music are used to good effect. There's a different tune for every stage (including the map screen) but not at the expense of sound effects. Choosing between one or the other just isn't necessary as every worthwhile event has an associated noise and the music suits the pace, which is ... pleasant, I suppose. Leisurely sounds too dull, and it's not that. ➔

done it again, with another pixel-perfect (and we mean *pixel* perfect) conversion of an obscure, but undeniably excellent, arcade game.



LEVEL ONE – THE LABYRINTH OF CAVES

① **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 100 Points Maximum
NOTES The dumbest of all creatures, it simply walks back and forth, turning only when it reaches the edge of a platform. It doesn't shoot either.

② **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 100 Points Maximum
NOTES: It bounces around within a limited area until it sees Toki, whereupon it bounces towards him.

③ **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 100 Points Maximum
NOTES: Flies around with five of its mates. They don't shoot but they do release a bouncing coin when they die.

④ **HIT POINTS: 4**
VALUE: 200 Points
NOTES: Rises out of the ground then makes a grab for Toki – so watch out for its arms. At least it doesn't shoot. Jumping on its head twice also does the trick.

⑤ **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 50 Points
NOTES: It's impossible to jump on this bird for it flies quite quickly in a straight line. It doesn't shoot but on its demise a Special Icon falls to the ground.

⑥ **HIT POINTS: 3**
VALUE: 50 Points Per Hit
NOTES: In the immortal words of Mc Hammer, y' cannae touch this. When it dies it explodes and unleashes poisonous spiky balls in all directions.

⑦ **HIT POINTS: 2**
VALUE: 100 Points
NOTES: It simply flaps about in a predictable, diagonal path.

⑧ **HIT POINTS: 2**
VALUE: 100 Points
NOTES: Flies back and forth in a sort of 'will-it-won't-it?' pattern.

⑨ **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 100 Points Maximum
NOTES: What a sneaky goat. It waits until Toki is on the same level before shooting across the screen in his direction.

⑩ **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 100 Points Maximum
NOTES: Scuttles along in a preset pattern which usually involves climbing up and down vines.

⑪ **HIT POINTS: N/A**
VALUE: Zero Points
NOTES: It's big and it's bad and despite all the effort Toki has to put in to get by it, it's not worth a single point – not one bit of it. It's operated by two of those yellow monkeys (who obviously have better things to do than bounce around), and it moves in a predictable square pattern. The four pounding fists at the bottom of this contraption are easily removed with a single shot each. The six dragon heads, which take turns to breathe fire, are also destroyed by a single shot each.

⑫ **HIT POINTS: 1**
VALUE: 50 Points
NOTES: It appears out of the blue looking like Slimer out of the Ghostbusters and it drops spears, one at a time.

⑬ **HIT POINTS: 2**
VALUE: 100 Points
NOTES: Moves up and down in the air, stopping at regular intervals to throw its poisonous balls in all directions. And if that wasn't bad enough, when it dies it explodes into two pairs of balls which fall in an arc. It's best to jump up and down a bit while firing at one of these, as this seems to decrease its accuracy. The sensible place to stand when a spider dies is straight beneath it.

⑭ **HIT POINTS: 24**
VALUE: Zero Points
NOTES: This ugly dude likes to jump around the screen and make a grab for Toki with its arms. It also frequently throws out strings of four bouncing monkeys at Toki. It's advisable to stand to the far left of the screen and spit like crazy at this Boss. It should be dead by the time it comes in for the kill.

Toki's spitting strength is improved by collecting special icons. Most of these are found lying around – others are dropped by the bird thing (No 5). The icons aren't worth any points and their effects don't last for long, so make the most of 'em.

⑮ Each one has the effect of two little balls. Other variations on this theme include the wibbly wobbly balls (not pictured) which are most effective. Not surprisingly, they wibble and they wobble.

⑯ These behave pretty much like the wibbly wobbly balls, only without the wibble or wobble.

⑰ Toki can go a-roastin' and a-toastin' with this baby, but only at a limited range.

⑱ So a crash-helmet is nothing to do with spitting prowess. But it does protect Toki's head and face from danger. And that's as good a reason as any to collect it.

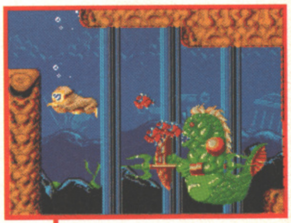
THE MAP SCREEN

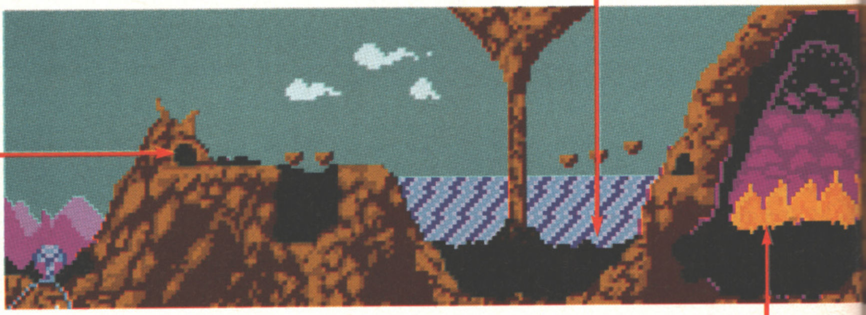
An overview of the world to be conquered is shown before play – in much the same way as it was done in CapCom's ageing *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, only here the section in question is highlighted by a tiny Toki icon and the story unfolds via text with each stage. Being the oh-so pleasant chaps that we are, we couldn't resist reprinting those descriptions in full...

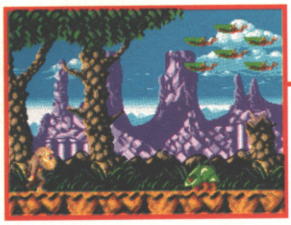
LAKE NEPTUNE

Having safely travelled thé labyrinth of Caves and escaped the jaws at the GATE of MOORNAR, TOKI has to swim across Lake NEPTUNE. But, beware of the eyes of RAMBACHA!!

Eek! Lake Neptune is infested by more than sharks. There are spiky mutant turtles, aquatic dinosaurs and a fat, green piranha-spitting creature bearing a shield and trident – all set against a parallax backdrop which didn't appear in the arcade parent but does here thanks to Ocean France. Rambacha is the Boss appears at the end of this level and resembles a floating, one-eyed Michelin man. From his single socket, four bouncing eyeballs are thrown in Toki's direction.







LABYRINTH OF CAVES

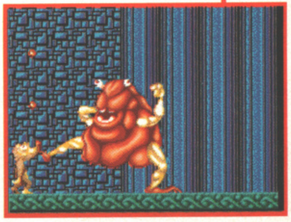
The evil of BASHTAR has seized the lovely MIHO. Her beloved, the mighty TOKI has also been dealt by a wicked blow. Now, reduced to a lowly ape, Toki must risk a perilous journey to free MIHO and regain his manhood.

Little needs to be said about this level, for it's shown in full within this very review.

CAVERNS OF FIRE

Made bold by his recent success, TOKI enters the blazing heart of the Caverns of FIRE in search of MIHO. Here, he will face a deadly test against MOGULVOR, the beastly guardian of this underground inferno.

Mogulvor sure is beastly. He's big, red and fat and spits out deadly letters which spell out the word BURP. He also tries to kick and slap Toki at every available opportunity.



- The creatures all have character – especially the Bosses. Being able to gain extra height by jumping on the little buggers is also neat (and occasionally useful for collecting items which are otherwise out of reach).
- The scenery's a little more interactive than usual, with walking up and down diagonal platforms and – best of all – the business with the seesaws and the 16-ton weights.
- There's always just enough warning to allow disaster to be avoided. Some sections seem far too hard, but once a technique is sussed, it can be done again and again...well, almost. It's never so straightforward that you can stroll on through a whole level.
- The ending is...No, I shan't tell you what happens, but suffice to say that it's (sigh) nice.

So if *Toki*'s so mighty fine, how come it hasn't got a higher rating? It is difficult to put down – in every sense. The problem is that the six levels are small but near-perfectly formed. What's there is so good, there should be more of it.

However, the biggest gripe I have about *Toki* has nothing to do with the gameplay, on the face of it anyway, and it hasn't actually affected the rating, though maybe it should. You see, it's the packaging – in particular the manual, a tiny, uninspired, two-colour booklet, two thirds of which isn't even in English. For £25.99 I expect a complete package. It's not just *Toki.* Too often software is treated like meat.

It's terribly disappointing to open a box to be greeted with an expanse of white and a plastic bag containing a disk

IN THE BEGINNING...

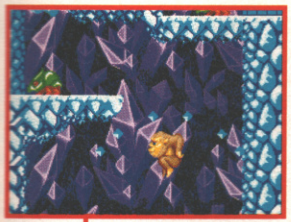
The heart-rending story of Toki's plight is related through an animated introduction. Toki's sweetheart Miho, is abducted by the evil wizard Bashtar. Before Toki can give chase, Bashtar casts a spell, leaving Toki in the guise of an ape. Pausing only to pick a few fleas, he sets off to recover his love and his body.

Uh-oh. There goes another fair maiden.

And here's a hero we prepared earlier.

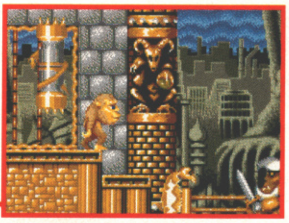
'Hey, you can't cast spells on me, I'm the hero!'

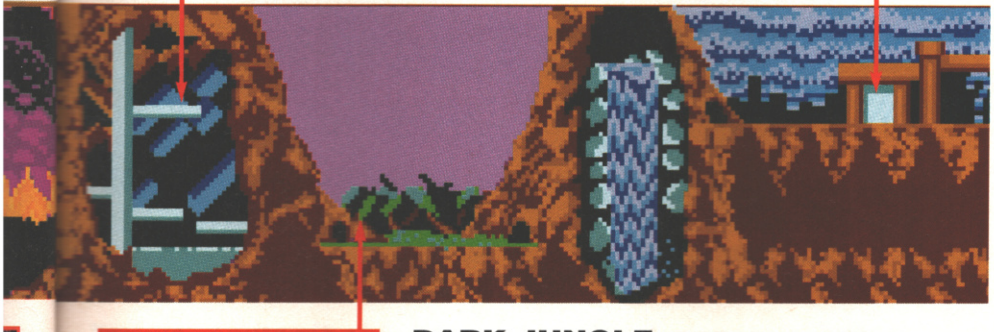
'Erm, anybody got a banana?'



ICE PALACE

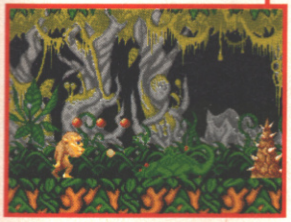
From fire to ice, TOKI'S mission takes place into the forbidden reaches of the ice palace. After swimming in the sunk passageway, he must emerge to fight the frozen monster, ZARZAMOTH.
What's neat about this level is that it's not slippery as you may expect. Instead the platforms of ice shatter after a few seconds of contact and reform moments later. The glinting wall of ice in the background looks nice too. And Zarzamoth? It's a mammoth made from ice. It throws its boomerang-like tusks at Toki and jumps about a bit for good measure.





GOLDEN PALACE

TOKI'S final quest takes him to the palace of MIHO'S prison, the golden palace. Walking across the bridges of this maleficent domain, TOKI must battle against his greatest foe, VOOKIMEDLO. Everything depends on this fight.
So! It was Vookimedlo all along, eh? Here's where you get the chance to give him the kicking he so richly deserves. But first, there's work to be done ... This level is split into two distinct sections (three if you count the scrap with old Vooki). The first is in keeping with the previous stages but with new adversaries and obstacles to overcome (such as the spiky, pounding crushers – complete with a synchronised, animated cog mechanism which would do Rolex proud – seen here). Then follows a deadly trolley ride comprising diabolical arrangements of spiky balls to avoid along the way.



DARK JUNGLE

The peal of thunder leads TOKI to the dense vegetation of the dark jungle. Making his way through the tangled vines, TOKI faces a deadly contest against an old enemy, BASHTAR. If he wins, MIHO won't be far.
The flash of lightning periodically fills the sky behind the trees and white flakes flitter down the screen. How sweet. But it's not all jungle out there: a small section of temple has to be negotiated before a confrontation with Bashtar's giant, grabbing hands and stomping feet.

and a small manual. Why can't the care and attention lavished on the program itself extend to the packaging? Yes, a glossy full-colour manual would obviously be less cost effective for the publisher, but so much more could have been done even with a two-colour affair.

(Indeed, what do you think about the current state of computer entertainment software packaging? What are the most and least impressive packages you own? What improvements would you make? Write and tell us at the usual address ...)

Still, at least if the mood takes you, you can always take the box lid and rub its edge against a matt surface to recreate a sound not entirely dissimilar to the grunting of an angry gorilla. How very appropriate. • ***GARY PENN***

▲ **UPPERS** Has all the gloss and playability you'd expect to find in a genuine arcade machine.

▼ **DOWNERS** It's disappointing but true: what's there is smashing but there's just not enough of it.

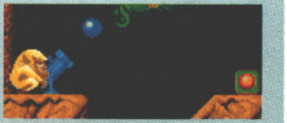
THE BOTTOM LINE

An excellent – you could even say stunning – coin-op conversion, though the lack of size and depth (it doesn't have as much to it as, say, *Rainbow Islands*) keeps it from the top rung. We have seen worrying inconsistencies between versions too – some boxed copies have been so bugged as to be unplayable, while others seem fine.

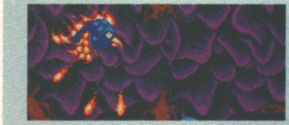
87 PERCENT

TOKI CREATURE COMFORTS

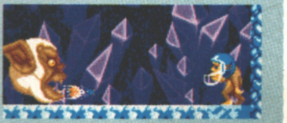
The inhabitants of Level One aren't half as strange as some of those making their debut in the later stages. Here are a few you can expect to meet ...



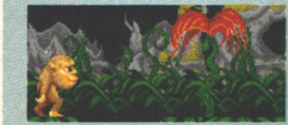
One of the bouncing monkeys has evolved by the time Toki reaches the second stage. This chimp sits at a cannon and shoot bombs in a set sequence of arcs.



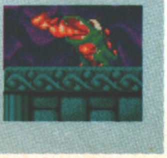
It only appears when Toki trips one of those invisible triggers. A quite resilient beast, it flaps around the screen and shoots a spread of three flames.



Don't you think it bears a passing resemblance to a Mogwai crossbred with a Gremlin? It's not that strong and tends to keep its distance from Toki, preferring to spit fire at him instead.



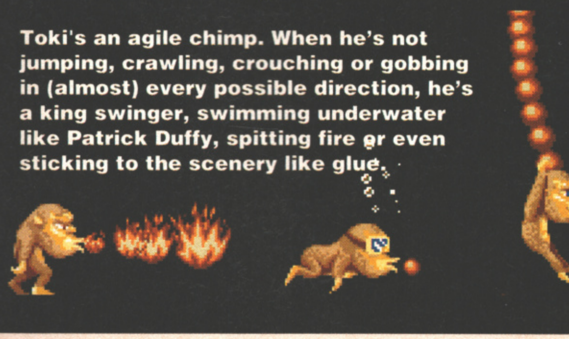
In the dark forest a seed drops down from the top of the screen and quickly grows into a plant which throws out a poisonous spore. Neither can be killed but they do provide 50 points for every hit.



It first makes an appearance in the fiery caverns of Level Three. It actually hatches from a pulsating egg, pieces of which fly off and cause problems of their own. The dragon appears to be wearing a wig, which explains why it paces back and forth in a put-upon way, stopping at regular intervals to spit fire.

HE'S AN APE, APE MAN ...

Toki's an agile chimp. When he's not jumping, crawling, crouching or gobbing in (almost) every possible direction, he's a king swinger, swimming underwater like Patrick Duffy, spitting fire or even sticking to the scenery like glue.



The long-awaited follow-up to famous space epic *Millennium 2.2* is finally with us.

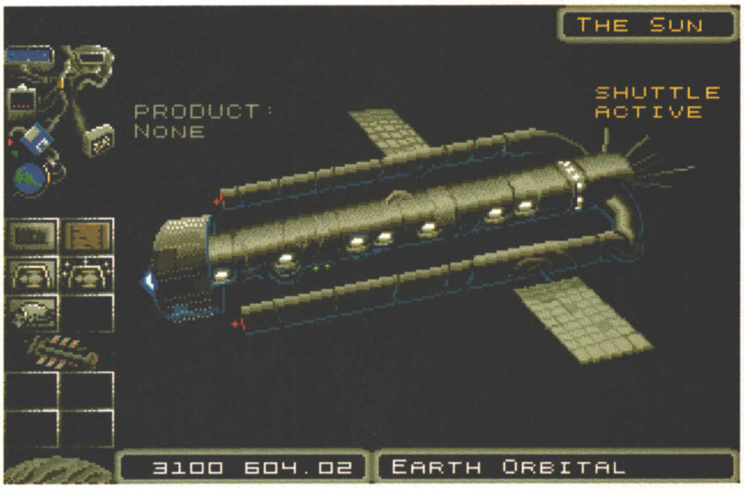
DEUTEROS

Game: Deuteros
Publisher: Activision
Price: £25.99
Author: Ian Bird, Jay Redman
Release: Late August

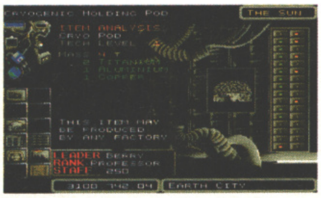
If there's one thing this review has to make clear, it's don't take *Deuteros* at face value. Initially it seems to offer no concrete purpose, deliver no discernible enemy. It's a space-bound strategy epic alright (and we've seen enough of those in our time) but the challenge it offers you is surprisingly vague – to explore the imponderable mysteries of space or, if you like, set up your own space programme from scratch. You could be forgiven for thinking that it all sounds like one great big yawn, but don't make that mistake – it's actually one of the best, most complete and atmospheric empire-building games we've ever seen.

But first off, the initial impressions. *Deuteros* is set on Earth in the year 3000AD, and sets you the vaguest of tasks. Your job is to explore the heavens, but before you get to do that you have to prepare for the trip. It's not just a case of packing sandwiches though – mankind has forgotten everything it ever knew about space travel, you see, (for reasons we'll explain later on) so your task incorporates everything from employing a suitable crew to building your very first space ship!

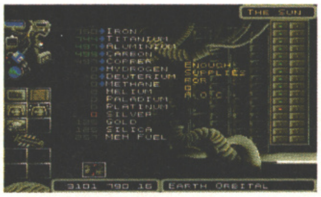
This is a strategy game, remember, so it's not so much a case of you having to do everything, as of you having to *tell everybody else* to do everything! From your control console you can access a production centre, a school for the training of scientists, engineers and pilots, and a storage silo. By clicking on the relevant icons on the main screen, you can move into each area and set about making preparations. Hardly any movement takes place on screen at all – it's as if you are moving around a huge complex, checking your employees' clip-boards and making positive suggestions. By clicking on any activity centre icon you can move in and start making things happen.



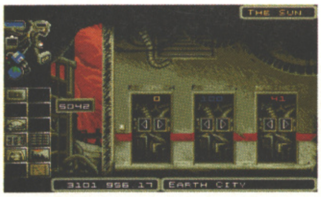
Orbital factories are of enormous importance, and they don't come easily. Once one of these suckers has been constructed you can *really* start playing hell with the heavens!


CRYOGENIC HOLDING POD
THE SUN
ITEM ANALYSIS
CRYO POD
TECH LEVEL
MASS 4 T
2 TITANIUM
1 ALUMINIUM
1 COPPER
THIS ITEM MAY
BE PRODUCED
BY ANY FACTORY
LEADER BERRY
RANK PROFESSOR
STAFF 250
3100 742.04
EARTH CITY

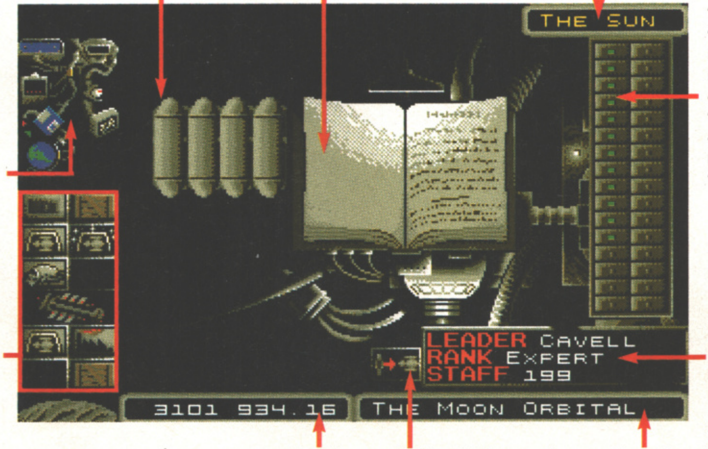
Cryogenic pod. It looks like a bloated brain, but it's used to cart personnel across the skies. Only idiots build space stations and forget to put people on them.


THE SUN
IRON
744 TITANIUM
497 ALUMINIUM
499 CARBON
COPPER
0 HYDROGEN
0 DEUTERIUM
0 METHANE
0 HELIUM
0 PALADIUM
0 PLATINUM
0 SILVER
125 GOLD
125 SILICA
MEH FUEL
ENOUGH SUPPLIES FOR
3101 790.16
EARTH ORBITAL

Maintaining sufficient supplies of minerals can be a pain. Just when you're putting the finishing touches to a project, you'll have to go scuttling off for yet more ingredients.



Deuteros **gives you nothing more than a bunch of chumps for employees. Sticking them into these compartments has the effect of turning monkeys into workers.**



A production pod reaches completion. As engineers learn their craft, production become more efficient.

The Control panel. See separate diagram for a more detailed explanation.

The various locations in a selected base can be accessed via these icons.

The book indicates whatever item is in production.

This shows the system you're currently in.

The scientists' filing cabinet. Red lights indicate ideas – by activating these they turn into actual kit, but this process can take time.

Data on the lead production person. The higher their rating, the better they will be at getting things built.

Stardate

Clicking this icon sends your engineer back to the shuttle base.

Current orbital factory.

PRODUCTION SCREEN

All your hardware is constructed here.

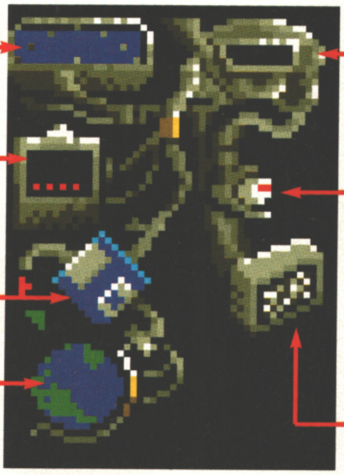
Logically, the best move is to train up the boffins and set them about working out just how they're going to build a space craft. Meanwhile, your production capability must be stepped up by building a number of mining rigs (your maximum is eight) with which to gather the various raw materials you'll need. It's only then that space exploration can begin; it's rough enough without the added burden of enemies or rivals.

At first the most insidious obstacle is a slackening of purpose – *Deuteros* eventually kicks into life like a sleepy elephant, which befits the game's magnitude, but the opening sequences can drag. It's rare that a game offers you so very little right at the beginning – the iron and oil isn't even out of the ground...

But anyway, back to the task at hand. One of the great strengths of the game is that while orders are initiated, time literally stands still. It only advances when you click on the colourful 'advance time' icon, so you can whiz around your little empire giving orders, then click on the clock to get them all undertaken simultaneously. At times later in the game, when your exploratory efforts resemble a pan-galactic web, this proves to be very useful indeed.

Unlike far too many strategy games, all the multifarious screens are easy to access at any time, making it a doddle to

CONTROL PANEL ICONS



Return to Master screen. Tricks like this make it easy to move around *Deuteros.*

Time advance – click to start and click to stop.

Stock taker – let's you know what kit, tools and minerals are available, and where to get them.

It's the not-very-interesting save icon.

Time advance – click to start and click to stop.

Planet surveyor lets you check out all those lumps of rock you're going to pillage.

Click on here for news bulletins. (Unfortunately, they're not all that useful).

FAILURES AT SPACE TRAVEL

I know what you're thinking. You are wondering why it is that mankind, in the year 3000AD, has such a struggle getting one measly space ship off the ground, let alone a vast galactic empire. A brief explanation is probably necessary.

***Deuteros* is the sequel to the two year-old *Millennium 2.2* (by the same author). That finished off with earth people taking an almighty slap from some pretty unsavoury aliens, and space explorers everywhere deciding to call it a day. Now some seven hundred years have passed, and the Magellans and Columbuses of the day have had enough of lounging around. It's time to strike out but – oh no! – careless ancestors have lost all the data about their previous space exploration.**

This little turn of events presents the modern project leaders with some nice teasers. They are pretty certain that human-kind was once able to stroll around the planets, and some suspect that the presence of a glorious but neglected 'Moonbase' is more than an urban myth. People are hungry for information, and it's your job to retrace history's overgrown path.

And so the odyssey begins...

This time you've got to start a space programme from scratch, and it's not easy!

step into any part of the operation you like. As the game progresses, so does your empire, and new icons are created as new space locations are built.

At first the engineers and scientists are slow (like you, they are beginners). But while the basic tools with which to launch an exploration are being assembled, the canny researchers are coming up with ideas. Turning them into reality is hardly a breeze, since the engineers are rookies, and the tools are basic, but at least in these early stages of the game your only concerns are with the simple construction of space shuttles, space cruisers and space factories. (Don't worry though, you will be able to cope later on too, as I'll explain in a moment).

A SENSE OF URGENCY AND REALISM

Deuteros' great strengths are exactly the same things that initially appeared to be its weaknesses – the lack of any clear idea about where you're actually going, the strong sense of urgency and realism it generates simply because there are so many chores to attend to, and so on. Every so often it's important you sit back and think carefully about just what is going on – at first I was horrified at the idea of spending hours bumbling around making mistakes in the name of Lord knows what. All too soon though, curiosity grips you, and the weird workmanlike quality of the game's progress verges on the electrifying. When things start to happen, they really happen...

One nice thing about *Deuteros* is that as you get smarter, so do your computerised scientists. Whenever you step into the scientists' lab, they will have come up with new ideas represented by little red lights on a large filing cabinet icon. Click on the ideas that are worthy of research and a plan will soon come into being. Better plans will require more resources, which will require more exploration. And so it goes on.

And here lies the uncanny but gripping attraction of *Deuteros*. While you're busy marvelling at your odyssey's accelerating progress, the researchers and engineers are coming up with better ideas and better tools. Not only can they, with your guidance, build machines to push you further, they can build cool computers which take over the more tiresome, mechanical tasks that you have now mastered.

Deuteros' timing borders on the extra-sensory. For many of us, crunching and juggling numbers is a sure way to turn the brain into strawberry blancmange. So just when the low level logistics are starting to get in the way of more grandiose aspirations and bog you down, up pops some whizzy scientist with an idea for a computer that automates the whole process.

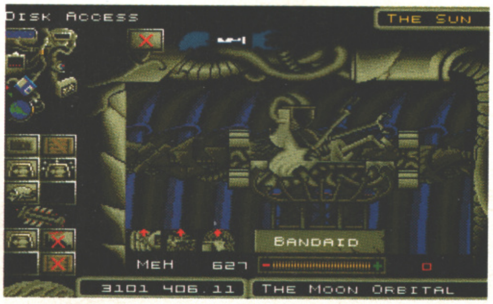
Let's have an example. When setting up a distribution chain for the transportation of basic minerals you don't want to be continuously loading and unloading iron onto shuttles. While this is a good way of getting a feel for the game's concept at an early stage, it soon becomes a bloody pain, and it's at just this point that the game offers you an automated solution. It's uncanny, this sense *Deuteros* seems to have of when everything is needed, it really is.

Here is a game which offers nothing at the beginning, but as soon as one tiny achievement is made, it starts teasing you with the potential for more.There's always something to be cleared up, some tempting world to be exploited. Like a fruit machine there is never any moment when you can honestly say that enough is enough without risking missing out on some pleasant surprise.

Progress isn't made by simply landing on deserted hunks of rock and stripping them of minerals though. There are shocks-a-plenty and no amount of careful planning can ready you for some of the unpleasant little horrors that *Deuteros* throws up now and again.

Once the first door has been nudged aside and you've peered inside the game, it is utterly impossible to stop messing around. Activision reckons there are 70 hours of play here, but I disagree. There are seven systems to explore, and it'll take you a fortnight just to get out of the Sun's familiar sphere of influence! This is by no means a criticism, simply an indication of the depth and immensity of *Deuteros*.

If you take up *Deuteros* then prepare for an arduous beginning, but once the concept and the machinations of the game become clear, it becomes completely enchanting. If strategy is your thing then you'll have a wonderful time organising, building, preparing, protecting and moving on. If strategy is not your thing, but you fancy a challenge, here's your chance. Quite simply, *Deuteros* will be remembered as one of the games of 1991. • ***COLIN CAMPBELL***



Loading essentials onto any of your ships takes up much of the early strategic calculations. Here, a Bandaid pod (for repairs) is being slotted onto a shuttle – this turns out to be a smart move...

LOOKING AFTER YOUR PEOPLE

It's worth remembering that pilots, engineers and scientists are not mindless droids. They all learn, progress and develop discernible personalities, so allocating hands becomes of tactical importance. In fact, the way their characters develop has been likened to the effect created by a novel – each individual develops strengths, weaknesses, a whole history, as the story progresses and they spread across the sky. Putting the right people in place is as important as giving them the right instructions – this is a management game in the true sense of the word.

UPPERS Engrossing and enrapturing. There's always more to see and do. For a game of this size, it's agreeably easy to use.

DOWNERS Takes a while to get going. Needs absolute concentration too – fast thrill seekers should look elsewhere.

THE BOTTOM LINE

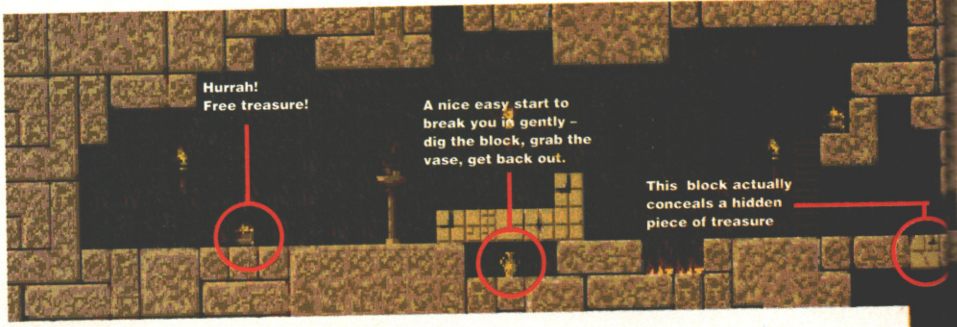
Packed with puzzles and problems, neat tricks and canny surprises. A game to really get drawn into.

89 PERCENT

With the cuteness of a *Pang*, and a slightly dubious sounding 'pneumatic weapon', *P.P. Hammer*

LEVEL 1

A nice gentle introduction which includes most of the game's features, but in a simple, easy and generally cuddly kind of a way.


Hurrah!
Free treasure!
A nice easy start to break you in gently – dig the block, grab the vase, get back out.
This block actually conceals a hidden piece of treasure

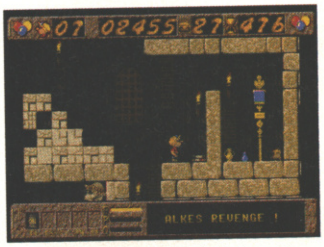
PP HAMMER

Game: P.P. Hammer And His Pneumatic Weapon
Publisher: Demonware
Price: £25.53
Author: Gunnar Lieder
Release: Out now

Pneumatic weapon, eh? Just thank your lucky stars Gary isn't doing this review, that's all.

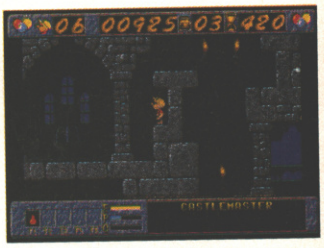
P.P. Hammer And His Double Entendre is a puzzle-platform-arcade game type of thing, featuring the eponymous hero (and indeed his eponymous 'thing') in dozens of levels of treasure-gathering fun and larks. Anyone who remembers the 8-bit cult legend *Lode Runner* will find *P.P. Hammer And His Palpitating Mechanism* strangely familiar, but for everybody else, here's a quick run-down of the basic principle.

P.P. (Peter Purves, perhaps?) finds himself in a maze of platforms and ladders, which is also full of lovely treasure. Before P.P. (Prince Paul?) can leave the maze and move onto the next one, he has to collect every single piece of booty, a task which is made harder than it might seem by the fact that many of the desirable items are found buried deep below several layers of seemingly-impenetrable rock. Luckily, P.P. (Penelope Pitstop?) had the foresight to bring along with him his pneumatic weapon (or 'drill') with which he can dig through the rock and get to the treasure, but he is handicapped by the fact that he can only dig through rock which is below and to the side of him, and not that directly underneath. Also (a bit of a departure from the laws of physics at this point), after a short while any rock which P.P. (Pretty Polly?) has blasted his way through will re-form itself in the space it originally occupied, so our hero can find himself trapped, or even worse, caught in the middle of the re-forming rock and turned into a human fossil. Oh, and if things weren't tough enough, the levels are also infested with nasty little animals, pools of water (P.P. can't swim), fire pits (P.P. isn't made of asbestos), shaky bits of ceiling that will plummet to the ground at the slightest provocation (like P.P. being somewhere in their general vicinity), sticky ground that slows his movement, and icy floors that he skids across uncontrollably. P.P. isn't the kind of chap to let such trifles dissuade him, but he's going to need some help to come out in one piece. And that's where you come in...



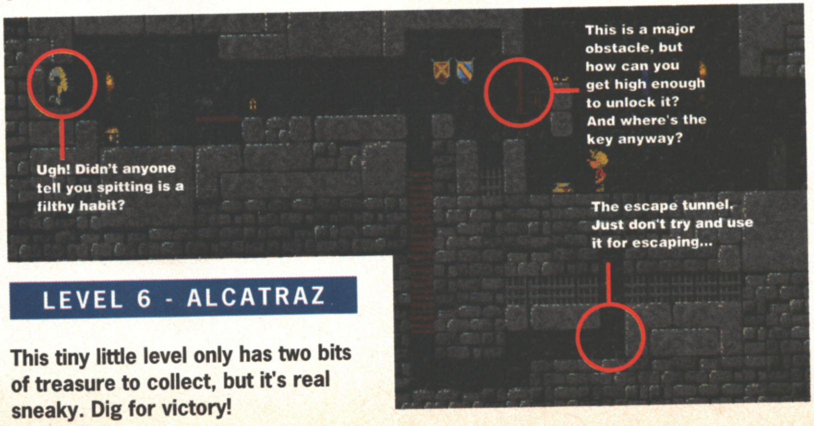
This screen features a particularly nasty trap – make sure you collect the treasure at your feet before you go up the ladder.

P.P. Hammer And His Quivering Implement is essentially a very simple game, so it's an easy one to just pick up and play. Once you grasp the basic concept of the drilling mechanism, it's all very straightforward. Complications set in very quickly though, in the form of locked doors, apparent dead ends, unscaleable walls and more. These are dealt with by means of various keys and potions which P.P. can find lying around in the mazes and pick up, to be used at a later date. (Up to five can be carried at one time). This makes things just a little too involved for my personal taste and smacks of lazy design (the strength of *Lode Runner* was in the amazing flexibility the small number of gameplay elements allowed, but in *P.P. Hammer And His Vibrating Tool* the programmers have too much scope for faffing around with the basic principle, and it makes the game feel less cohesive), but many people will probably disagree with me, and it's not too disastrous in any case. What I can't forgive is the uncomfortably heavy reliance on that ancient cop-out, invisibility. After the first few levels the game is plagued with invisible floor squares and invisible teleports, which is a ludicrous and unfair way of making a game difficult. To my mind, progress through a game should be a product of skill and reactions, not the result of a series of stab-in-the-dark guesses. In a very similar vein, the appearance of no-warning spike traps (like the ones in *Rick Dangerous 2*) is indicative of an unpleasant smugness on the part of the programmer, and has no place in a puzzle game, which is what this is. It's all very well to say, 'Ah, but after you've seen them once you know where they are, so you can avoid them subsequently', but if that's the case, why bother putting them in there at all? Being killed by something you had absolutely no way of anticipating and no chance to react to is an annoying and pointless thing to have happen in a computer game, and it gets my back up in a very major way.



P.P.'s adventure takes place against many different scenic backdrops. Here he's P.P. King of a castle. (Sorry).

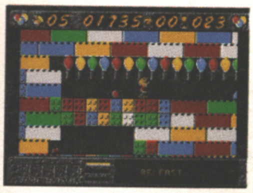
While I'm in a moaning kind of mood, another thing I don't like to see when playing a game is a message saying 'Disk Operation, Loading Level 2' (with a little


Ugh! Didn't anyone tell you spitting is a filthy habit?
This is a major obstacle, but how can you get high enough to unlock it? And where's the key anyway?
The escape tunnel. Just don't try and use it for escaping...

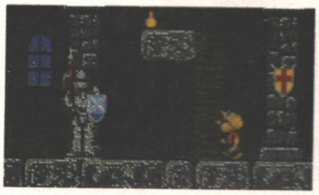
LEVEL 6 - ALCATRAZ

This tiny little level only has two bits of treasure to collect, but it's real sneaky. Dig for victory!

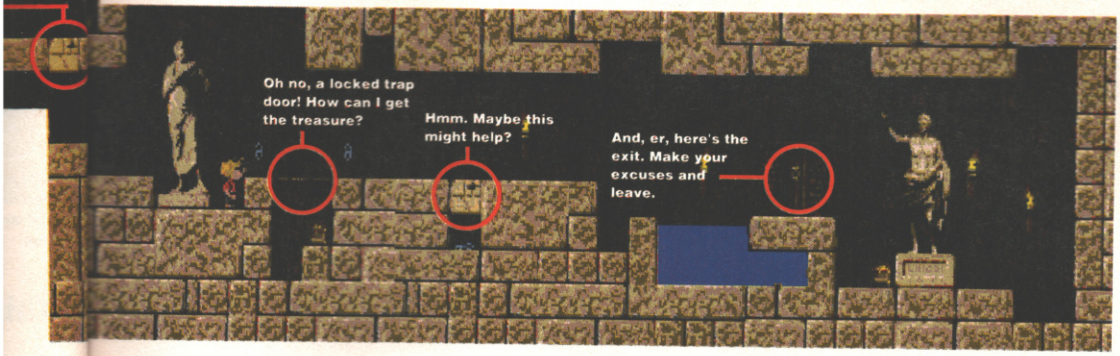
digs his way out of ancient 8-bit roots and onto the Amiga.

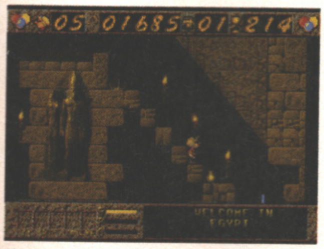


Scattered around you'll find the odd bonus room where you can pick up extra points. Strangely most of them seem to be in LegoLand...



Don't worry, the baddies are quite a bit easier to see when they're actually moving!


Oh no, a locked trap door! How can I get the treasure?
Hmm. Maybe this might help?
And, er, here's the exit. Make your excuses and leave.

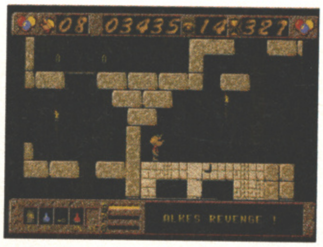


The Egyptian level sees P.P. plundering the inside of a Pharoah's tomb. Don't get killed, or you'll really be cursing.

picture of a disk just to emphasise the point). Call me romantic, but I don't wish to know that, I don't want to know what's going on in the mechanics of the game code. Playing a game should be like transporting yourself into another little world for a while, and something like this spoils the atmosphere and the continuity and brings everything crashing shabbily back down to Earth. It's something far too many games fall victim to, and the campaign to put a stop to it starts here.

And one more thing while I'm about it – is it strictly necessary for level codes in a game like this to be things like 'GQDJKITR'? Would it really kill the programmers to think of a few proper eight letter words? Dictionaries are full of them, it's not hard, and it's always better to be able to say to your chums, 'Hey, I found out the code for level 2, it's FISHCAKE', rather than, 'Hey, I found out the code to level 2, it's, erm, GFRU - no, DJJT, erm, well, I've got it written down at home, anyway...' I'm being really picky, I know, but I just can't see the point of being so wilfully bereft of imagination.

Okay, griping over, what are *P.P.*'s good points? Well, the little chap himself is full of character, especially when he ducks down and hides inside his hard hat in moments of danger. He really puts his heart into it when he's digging, too, and his wiggly dance after completing a level is cheeky and cute. The graphics are generally good – just large enough to have character and just small enough that you can fit a decent number of puzzles on the screen at any one time. Playability scores highly too, as does addictiveness (with loads of differently-styled levels, secret rooms to discover and so on), and if the sound is bloody awful (okay, the actual sound is fine, but the music is just plain hideous), well, that just goes to show you can't have everything.



Somewhere on this screen is the entrance to one of the secret bonus rooms. Can you spot it? (Of course you can't, it's a secret).

So the question is, 'Do the good points of *P.P. Hammer And His Throbbing Instrument* outweigh the bad ones?'

And the conclusive answer is, 'Well, erm, maybe.'

This game is extremely irritating in many ways, and distinctly mediocre in others, but its playability has kept me coming back to it quite a few times this month. There's a code after every level, so it's easy just to pick it up for an hour, do a couple of screens, and then leave it again to come back to another day. In this way it's a game that could last you a pretty long time, and even if it never raises the kind of thrills of a *Switchblade 2,* it's a pleasant way to spend a few days of game playing. Whether 'pleasant' is a good enough reason for you to fork out £25 or not is up to you. • ***STUART CAMPBELL***

▲ **UPPERS** Cute and tough,with lots of lastability, and above all, it's very playable.

▼ **DOWNERS** Lazy design, too much guessing involved after the first few levels, terrible music.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Lode Runner clone that loses out from not having *Lode Runner*'s single-minded simplicity. Nevertheless pretty good fun, but not as compelling as you might expect it to be.

70 PERCENT

PLEASE HAMMER, DON'T HURT 'EM (WITH YOUR WEAPON)

The world of P.P. Hammer is packed full with little surprises. Even a hard hat isn't sufficient protection against some of the things waiting for our P.P. Forewarned is forearmed though, so here are some features to watch out for...

A washed-out P.P. ascends to Hammer Heaven. Does this mean he'll be P.P. Hammer Of The Gods?

Bored with the incessant action, P.P. stops for a quick drag. There's absolutely nothing big or clever about smoking.

Rock? Yeah, can you dig it? (P.P. certainly can).

A level completed, and P.P. can't resist a quick dance of joy (the saucy little minx).

P.P. chooses the wrong way to get a suntan – falling into a deadly firepit. Ouch!

Walking on water? Not quite, but this invisible block saves P.P. from a horrible death by drowning.

Scattered throughout are nasty rock-falling traps like this. Watch out for the tell-tale quiver just before they crash down, P.P.!

This teleport will whisk P.P. to some other part of a level. (Many teleports are invisible too, though).

Another use for P.P.'s keys is to let down drawbridges like this one.

Oh no! The exit's still closed, so P.P. has to crawl back under the spike trap and go looking for more treasures.

If you look closely, you can just see that this floor is covered in slippy stuff that P.P. just can't stand still on.

Don't be an old-stick-in-the-mud – jump your way across this gooey stuff.

Funny

Funny

Whatever your mood-you've
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it is.

IBM PC & COMPATIBLES
TEL ONE
History is about to be rewritten by two guys who can't spell.
Bill & Ted's EXCELLENT adventure
Capstone

26:42
SCORE
00000000
OBJECT
DUDES
DONE

There is a Twinkie here!

28:07
SCORE
00000000
OBJECT
DUDES
DONE

In the mood for some serious fun...? Fancy a little light relief...? then recreate the action of the hit movie and join Bill and Ted on a "far out" trip through time.

Only two outrageous guys such as Bill and Ted would even contemplate this wacky adventure. During the time travels of a lifetime, or should that be several lifetimes, the crazy duo meet a collection of historic characters including Joan of Arc, Socrates the "philos-o-fizer", Beethoven, Freud and many more. What happens next...? Who knows!

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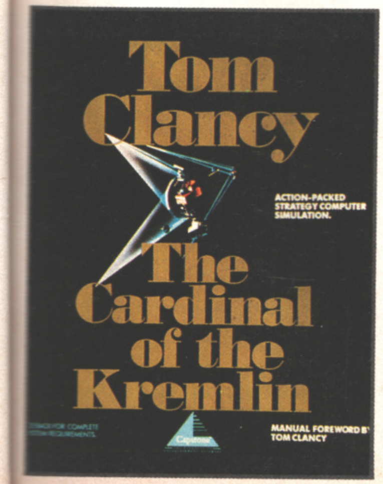
it aint.


Tom Clancy
ACTION-PACKED STRATEGY COMPUTER SIMULATION.
The Cardinal of the Kremlin
MANUAL FOREWORD BY TOM CLANCY
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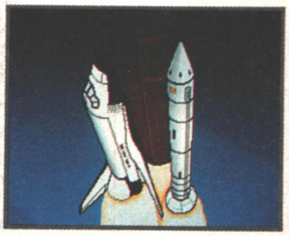

Power Test
POWER GENERATING CAPACITY
RISK OF LEAK
NEED TO TEST
TEST
LASER BEAM COHERENCY
RISK OF LEAK
NEED TO TEST
TEST
ATMOSPHERIC BLOOMING
RISK OF LEAK
NEED TO TEST
TEST
Test Results

Pwr Capacity
7%, Day 10
Failure mode 3
Lost Time:

Day11 Hour24

Testing in Pwr Capacity completed!
Testing in Sft Simul. completed!

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There's no time for fun, the enemy are right behind you!

Out now on your Amiga

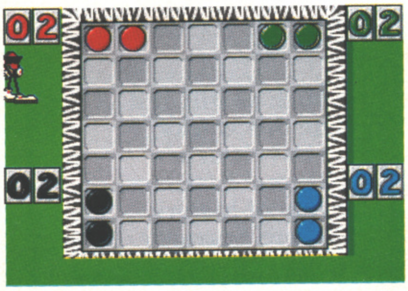
Screenshots from IBM PC version. All copyrights acknowledged.

After a long and tortuous history, the board game that isn't (quite) finally reaches the Amiga (unfortunately with an irritating licence tacked on).

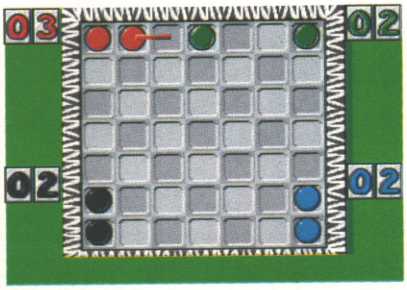
SPOT

AN OPENING STRATEGY

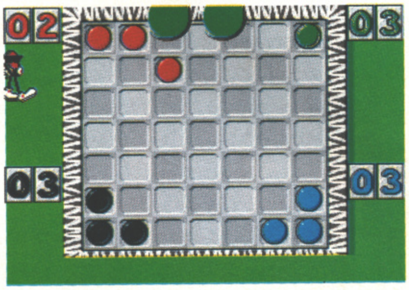
Here's an opening strategy which can be used to good effect by Red to wipe out the Green computer-controlled opponent. It works with every level of computer intelligence but the highest (that's nine).



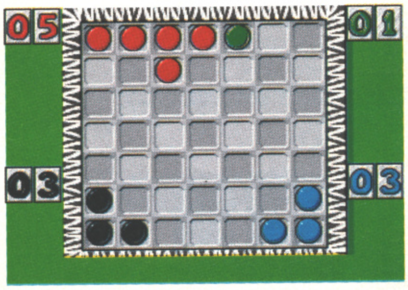
1. Our first move is to the square immediately to the right. Obviously there's little the three computer-controlled opponents can do at this stage.



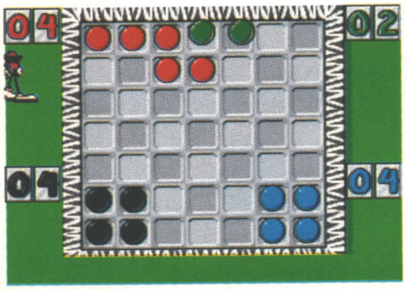
2. Move Number Two is a second step to the right, forming a line across the top of the board. Green decides to jump a piece to take out our furthermost Red counter. No problem.



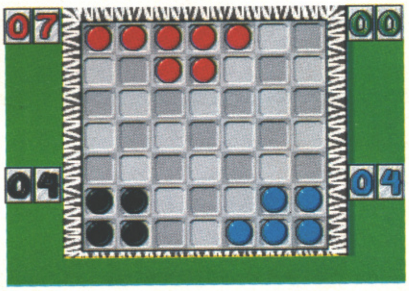
3. We retaliate and in the process tempt Green further by moving to the square down and to the right, converting Green's two pieces to Red. Black and Blue take no interest in this two-player battle, as neither side has made any threatening moves down the board.



4. Green responds to our previous move (and the increasingly desperate situation it finds itself in) by leaping its remaining counter a second time to take two of our pieces.



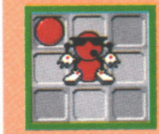
5. Ha hah! Eat it Green. A simple, single-square movement down and to the right removes Green from the board (and the game).



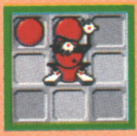
6. Now to tackle Black and Blue...

MEET SPOT

Or don't. The extent of his involvement goes beyond being a host. He's also a pain in the ass, not because of what he is but because of what he does: interfere with the flow of play. When a piece is selected it turns into Spot. When a move is made he performs an athletic action to land on the chosen square. He might moonwalk or polevault or even cartwheel – it all depends on the direction of the move. Great. And he does after about one femtosecond. Every single bloody move takes at least 10 times longer than it should, and is accompanied by the most knuckle-biting jingle ever heard. Thank heavens there's an option to stop the little bleeder doing this. But even when he's turned off, he still manages to make himself known. He appears by the human-controlled players' scores and taps his foot while a move is contemplated.

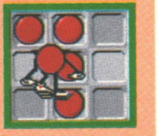


POP! Here's Spot. We all love him really, don't we? (Like hell).



PHEW! How appropriate. Spot is about to take a dive into the square below.

BERDOING! Spot polevaults over a square to reach his destination.



OW! Spot takes a moonwalk. He's bad (as in crap).

Game: Spot
Publisher: Leisure Genius
Author: Graeme Devine, Robert Stein III (producers & directors), Ken Hedgecock (music), Robert Stein III (animation), Darren Barlett (graphics), Binary Magic (original concept)
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

What is the point of producing a computerised version of an existing board game? Well, a computer-controlled opponent seems as good a reason as any – if it's any cop, that is. Otherwise, you might as well buy the real thing for around half the price.

However, here's a computerised version of a board game which doesn't exist, and couldn't in any other form without great difficulty. *Spot* is reminiscent of something, but I can't put my finger on what. *Othello* is what springs to most people's minds, and I'm no exception, even though the two have little in common other than a board and coloured counters.

Spot's board is seven squares square and supports up to four players. In *Othello* the colour of an opponent's pieces is changed by 'trapping' them between two points marked by the other player's pieces. In *Spot* the colour of the opponents' pieces is altered to that of the player's by placing a piece adjacent to them. A piece can either duplicate itself in an adjacent square or physically move two squares away by jumping (see AN OPENING STRATEGY for a slightly clearer idea of how this works). When the board's full the player with the most pieces on it is the winner. The only other vague similarity to *Othello* is that the state of the board can change quite significantly with a single move.

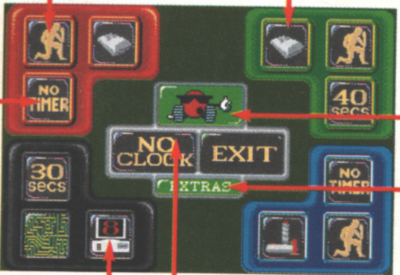
And that's *Spot* pretty much in a nutshell really.

So why *Spot*? Well, the game actually started life as *Infection* way back in 1988. *Infection* (so-called because the pieces were cells, which perhaps makes

Activate player, either human or computer controlled. You could play four computer-controlled opponents against each other and watch them to pick up some tips. But I don't advise it – the quit play option only works for human players, so you have to watch the contest through to its (potentially lengthy) conclusion (why the pointer remains on screen is beyond me – you can't do anything with it).

Select mode of human interface. But hold on? What happens when all four players are human-controlled? After all, the Amiga only has two Ports for joystick or mouse. Simple. All players with mouse control activated use the same device.

Any opponent whose head is so big it's in the clouds can be brought down to earth by activating the individual timers. This gives the player in question five, 10, 20 or 40 seconds to make a move – or lose it.



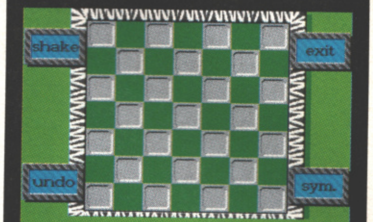
Spot's irritating, time-consuming, animated antics can be active or not, depending on your desire to suffer. When Spot is active his thumb is up. When he's disabled his thumb points down. Aaah. Tiresome little runt.

Determine computer-controlled player's intelligence. To add a dash of humanity to the proceedings, try playing against three computer-controlled opponents of differing intelligence.

What this option is doing here I don't know. There aren't any EXTRAS to turn on or off.

Turn on the clock to turn up the pressure all round. Actually, this borders on being the most pointless option of all. All players start with the same quantity of time in the bank, as it were – one, two, three, five or nine minutes. The time it takes a player to make a move is drawn from this bank. When it runs out, that's it. No more play. That's fair enough for keeping play short 'n' snappy. What's dumb is the fact that if the time bank runs out when a piece is selected then its colour changes to that of the next player. Oh sure, this is beneficial to the next player who gets the piece for free – though to be honest, it is fairly unlikely to happen as nobody's likely to select a piece until they know what they're going to do with it anyway.

EDITING THE BOARD



There's fun to be had here, by placing holes in the board to affect play. The idea-starved are advised to watch the attract sequence where the computer plays itself (this can be interrupted) on different board designs. Three handy options available are UNDO, SHAKE and SYM. The SHAKE feature places holes at random positions on the board, symmetrically, while SYM... Guess what? One tiny grumble here – it's regarding some more sloppy presentation. The SYM option isn't highlighted in any way so you can only tell if the symmetry is turned on by placing holes or squares on the board.

the whole idea of spreading to adjacent squares and changing the colours of counters a little easier to understand) was intended to be the flagship for the launch of Mastertronic's 16-Blitz budget label of £4.99 product.

But it was not to be. The journalists fortunate enough to play *Infection* weren't the only ones to be impressed – a big cheese at Virgin Games Software's American arm, Virgin Mastertronic Inc, saw it and realised its potential. The release was postponed while a new title was sought (in these days of AIDS it could have been deemed offensive, though it's interesting to note that one alternative put forward was 'Virus' – ouch).

The problem was solved when Virgin Mastertronic Inc acquired the licence to bring to this medium Spot, the poxy little character used by 7-Up to promote its 'un-cola' in the States (who needs the UK equivalent, Fido Dido, eh?). *Spot* first appeared on the Nintendo console. Despite the cosmetic changes, the basic concept shone through and it continued to impress (its fans include, apparently, Mr *Tetris* – Alexei Pazhitnov – himself). Needless to say, *Infection* will never see the light of day on the home computer front – a shame – even though it was licensed to arcade machine producer Leland Trade West (from whom Storm has licensed other titles for conversion) and released as *Attaxx*, retaining *Infection*'s look, feel and the David Whittaker sound and music.

GAMEPLAY THAT'S FIT TO BURST

As is the case with any board game worth its salt, *Spot* caters for the development of all manner of strategies, which vary depending on the quantity of players. The most obvious approach is to tempt an opponent to attack and leave itself vulnerable, although when playing against more than one human there's a tendency for two players to simply gang up on someone in an attempt to remove them from play. This isn't possible when playing with more than one (exclusively) computer-controlled opponent – in fact they can bugger up your strategy by playing a little more... 'objectively' shall we say.

That said, the nine skill levels of the computer do provide worthy opposition, and the time spent thinking isn't too lengthy. *Spot* represents a real treat for anyone remotely interested in the *Othello* ilk and comes thoroughly recommended. But before I call it a day, there are few annoying aspects to *Spot* which need to be highlighted.

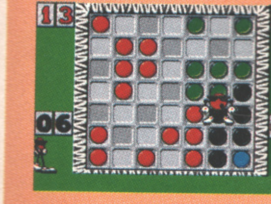
- Apart from the time it takes *Spot* to load, the worst is that there's no congratulatory sequence of any description. GAME OVER is displayed instead and this tends to have a negative effect, more so when you win. You have to look at the four scores to see who's won.
- The most irritating of the minor flaws is that if the machine is left alone for more than a few seconds before restarting play, the game flips into the title sequence and before you know it the default options have been assumed. Aargh!

And as for Mr Ken so-called musician Hedgecock, his bloody sound and music drove me up the wall, across the ceiling and through the floor. It grates worse than teeth down a blackboard.

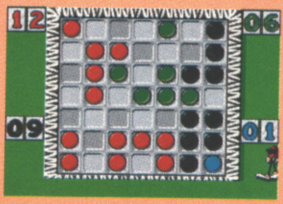
Now the *Infection* sound and music on the other hand – that was smart. All that breathing and slurping... Find an *Attaxx* arcade machine to see – hear rather – what I mean. (A note for trivia fans: apparently that piece was inspired by S'Express' 'Coma', even though they don't sound very similar).

These rough edges should simply not be present in full-price software (come to think of it, they weren't actually in the original *Infection*), especially from a company based in America, a country which prides itself on its slick software. Anyway, that's my beef over and done with. The last thing I want to do is put you off owning the game – it really is rather impressive. • ***GARY PENN***

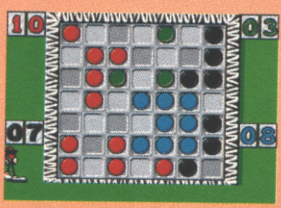
GETTING CAUGHT UP IN THE THICK OF THINGS



We join four players in the thick of the action. Oh dear. Blue's in a bit of trouble – there are no available squares so he can't move. Everyone else can though.



As play has progressed, a gap has been created so Blue can move – a jump up and to the left.



Blue changes the colour of Red, Green and Black's pieces. Now Blue has eight pieces to choose from – unless they get wiped out by the other three players.

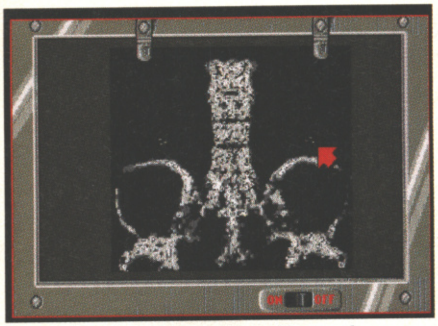
UPPERS A simple concept which all the family can understand and enjoy for many, many months – years even. A wide array of useful options are included.

DOWNERS The absence of suitable rewards is marginally annoying, especially for the younger player who will find it easier to relate to the Spot character. Come to think of it, given the mature nature of this product, the Spot connection is pretty much superfluous. Its look doesn't in any way reflect its feel.

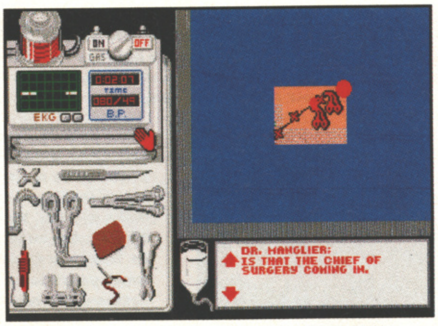
THE BOTTOM LINE

A class board-based act marred by rank sound, some minor presentation flaws, and the twee Spot connection.

88 PERCENT

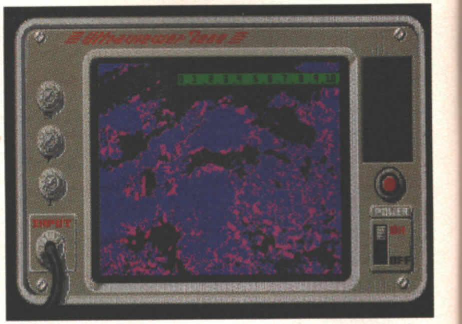


Is it a pair of handcuffs? Some sort of bug-eyed space monster? No! It's an X-ray of somebody's pelvic region.



DR. HANGLIER:
IS THAT THE CHIEF OF SURGERY COMING IN.

Oh no, here comes the chief surgeon! Hide all those patients we made a mess of quickly!



Ultrasound – nine out of 10 pregnant women prefer it. (It has lots of other uses too, mind).

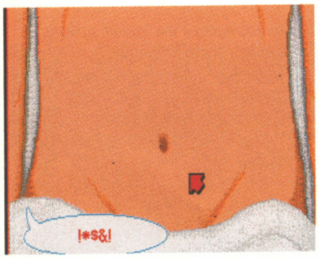
LIFE & DEATH

After a three year wait (just like on the NHS), Mindscape's game of internal affairs

Game: Life & Death
Publisher: Mindscape
Price: £25.53
Author: Simon J Beal
Release: Out now

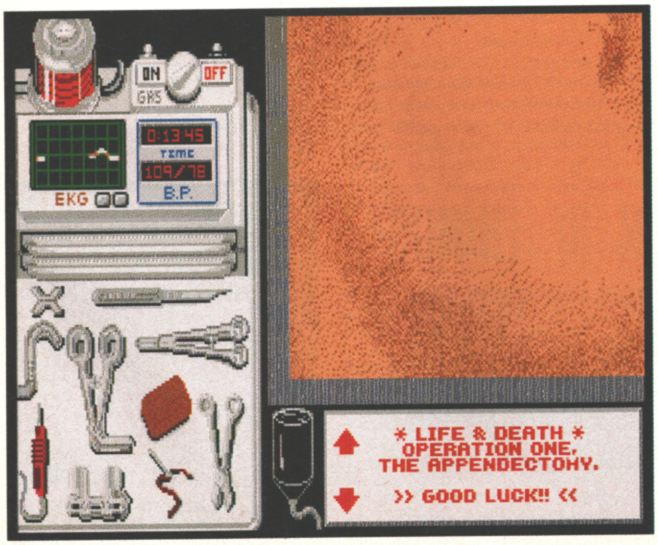
Oddly, the title screen for this game displays a notice claiming a copyright date of 1988. Presumably, this refers to the PC version's release – the Amiga conversion has taken a ridiculously long time to get finished. That's not the only odd thing about it though – I mean, how many games can you recall that put you in the shoes of an abdominal surgery specialist? (Okay, apart from *Barbarian*.)

Still, that's exactly where you find yourself here. As a novice surgeon at Toolworks General Hospital, you spend your time prodding at the stomachs of people with a wide range of internal defects, ranging from intestinal gas to full-blown appendicitis. It's your job to decide, with the aid of X-rays and ultra-sound scanning, exactly what ails your patients and what action to take about it. Beware though – their lives are very much in your hands and mistakes invariably (well, most of the time) result in your charges shuffling off this mortal coil, not to mention your wrists receiving a severe slapping from the chief of surgery.



And what seems to be the problem? Let's take a closer look, shall we? (And please mind your language!)

If your diagnosis involves any actual cutting-people-open-and-hacking-around-with-their-bits type of stuff, then you have to perform the operation yourself, and this is where you get into the real guts of the game (sorry).



* LIFE & DEATH *
OPERATION ONE,
THE APPENDECTOMY.
>> GOOD LUCK!! <<

My turn to operate! Here we go with our first attempt at surgery. It's just you, that tray of instruments on the left there, and some poor unfortunate stranger. 'Good luck' indeed.

Choosing the most suitable members of your staff to help out is no arbitrary matter. You need the two most appropriate assistants from a choice of six (and be careful, some of them don't get on too well with each other, and this may affect their efficiency in the theatre). Then it's time for you to oversee or perform every aspect of the process personally, from washing your hands and putting on your latex gloves (a real pair of latex gloves are supplied in the box to help generate that authentic atmosphere) to actually chopping bits out of your patients and tying up all those loose and gooey ends afterwards.

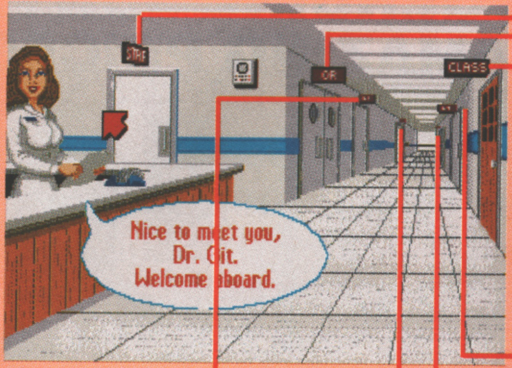
Any potentially stupid mistakes will be stopped in their tracks by your assistants, who will recommend the correct course of action to you, except at the higher skill levels (three are available) where they become markedly less helpful. Otherwise you're on your own – if you mess up badly and cause your patient to die (as you certainly will many, many times in the beginning), the chief of surgery will call you back to medical school and sarcastically point out what you did wrong and what you should do next time. He also performs this service when you get the initial diagnosis wrong, or when you fail to follow correct procedure at any time. And that's it.

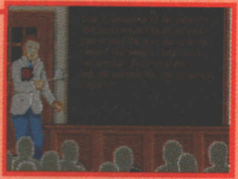
Whatever else you say about *Life & Death*, it's certainly a brave and original concept in these days of licences and coin-op conversions. However, bravery and originality alone do not a great game make. At first it seems like a stupendously good idea, and for the opening half-an-hour or so the game proves both novel and entertaining. From then on though, you've seen everything that's in it (as well as most of the things that are in your patients) and interest begins to wane.

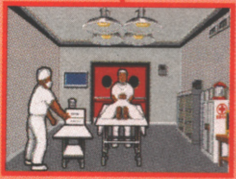
Life & Death is in fact a very simple game masquerading as something incredibly complex. Unfortunately the diagnosis section doesn't really form an essential part of the game, is largely window-dressing, and therefore becomes an irritating obstacle. Operating is the only truely active and satisfying section of the whole thing, as none of the other options actually call on you to *do* anything. On diagnosing kidney stones, for example, you simply refer the patient to a urologist and that's your involvement with that particular case over with.

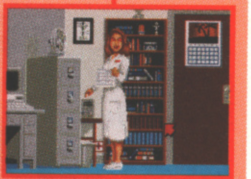
Even the operations are a bit of a bind, being high on nitpicky detail (the number of layers of skin you have to slice through before you get near any organs, for instance, is unnecessary and daft) and incredibly unforgiving of mistakes. This may very well be highly realistic, but hey, if you want realism, what are you doing playing a computer game? If you really

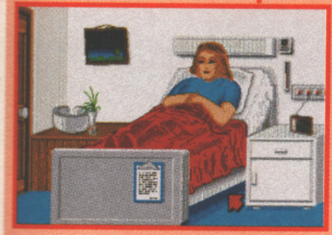
EMERGENCY WARD 10 – THEIR LIVES IN YOUR SHAKING HANDS

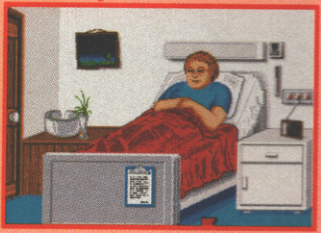


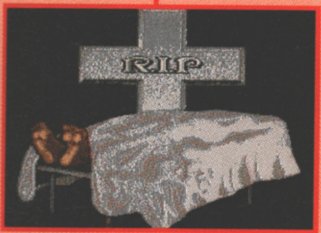

Here's where you get your knuckles rapped by the chief of surgery. It's just like being back at school.


And here's the centre of all the attention. (Strange, they seem to have cleaned up all the blood since last time...)

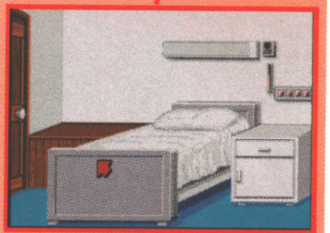

Check through the personnel nurse's filing cabinet to choose your optimum operating team.


Ethel Merman is a 59 year old female. She was admitted to hospital complaining of pain and discomfort in the mid-abdominal region.


Alf Garnett is a 47 year old male suffering from abdominal pain, accompanied by flu-like symptoms such as nausea, generalized weakness, and dizziness.



Nellie Dean was a 35 year old female, suffering from acute abdominal pain, general weakness, and dizziness. I wrongly diagnosed intestinal gas, and she died of a burst appendix.


Either a) you've just killed this patient and so the bed's empty or b) when he learned you were to be their doctor he ran off. (You can tell this isn't an authentic NHS simulation – you get the odd empty bed now and again).

turns out to be brave, original...but no cause for surgical high spirits.

want to open up someone's guts go to medical school or join the armed forces..

Mindscape is at great pains to point out that *Life & Death* is 'a game for fun, not education'. Trouble is, it achieves neither – the game even fails to properly educate you about how to play it. The instructions in general are woefully inadequate – I actually had to phone Mindscape for several elementary pieces of information before I could get anywhere – and the programming is lazy. I found bugs that crashed the game as well as loads of spelling and typographical errors. Okay, these are minor points and they don't actually affect the gameplay, but when you pay £25 for a piece of software I don't think it's unreasonable to expect someone to have bloody well spell-checked it first. *Life & Death* is sloppy, annoying and bursting with loads of really niggly little, er, niggles.

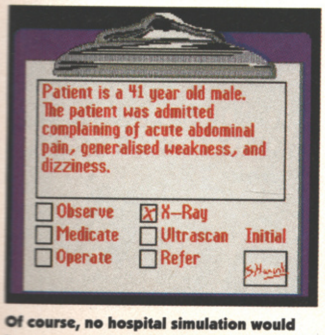
Here's one example, but there are lots of other I could have picked. When you X-ray a patient, the programmers have gone to the trouble of putting an on-off switch on screen that you have to flick to switch the machine on. Fine, so why when you do so does the switch still read 'off'? Is this just laziness, or what?

Another example: there are speech samples which crop up when you examine a patient ('Ouch', 'Eek', 'Ow', 'Oh my God, that's incredibly painful, please stop it now' etc), but no matter what sex the patient is, the samples are still of a man's voice – which is just silly – especially when the game runs in 512K (including the speech), but claims to be enhanced on one meg machines. I haven't come across any enhancements even after several hours on the one meg version, but extra speech would have been one of the most obvious ways to use the extra memory.

Life & Death oozes unexplored potential. The idea of limiting it's scope to the abdominal area is quite possibly one of necessity (can you imagine how much memory would be needed to store the internal workings of a whole body?). But the guts are hardly the most exciting part of the body, and it would have been considerably more interesting to have had, say, the upper chest area (heart, lungs, some bones etc) to work with.

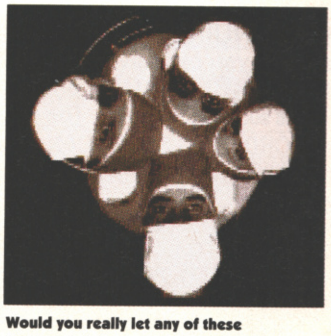
What really kills the game in the end, though, is the repetitiveness. There are only about half-a-dozen possible diagnoses, and you can find yourself spending long, long minutes identifying viral infections over and over again before being called on to actually do anything of a vaguely surgical nature. Even when you are so required, each operation is very much like the last one, and the whole thing unfortunately becomes something of a bore. I hate to be so down on something so innovative, but there's no way around it. *Life & Death* is a missed opportunity. •

Stuart Campbell


Patient is a 41 year old male. The patient was admitted complaining of acute abdominal pain, generalised weakness, and dizziness.

☐ Observe ☒ X-Ray
☐ Medicate ☐ Ultrascan Initial
☐ Operate ☐ Refer

Of course, no hospital simulation would be complete without a plentiful supply of on-screen clip-boards.


Would you really let any of these unsavoury fellows come anywhere even *near* your insides? We think not.

UPPERS Very original, very challenging indeed, and it captures that sweaty-hands operation tension admirably. Well-packaged too, with free latex gloves, a book on the history of surgery and even a surgeon's face mask!

DOWNERS Surprisingly little to it, and it becomes repetitive to an almost ridiculous degree within a very short space of time. Sloppily put together in many ways.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A three-year old game, and it's showing its age somewhat. *Life & Death* isn't completely terrible, but I certainly wouldn't join any long waiting lists for it.

55 PERCENT

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COMPLETE CONTROL

This month our biggest ever Complete Control brings you *Switchblade* maps, *Supercars* courses, plus tips on *Brat*, *MegaTraveller 1* and more. If you've a cheat, a map (or anything else really) to share with us, you know where we are – there'll be software prizes for every one we use.

FIGHTER BOMBER

On the pilot select screen type 'BUCKAROO' to play any mission, and press 'D' to shoot to your next waypoint (whatever that means).

Robert Howe, Bristol.

CHASE HQ II

HI SCORE
SCORE
TIME

Pause the game and type 'IN A GARDENIN'. Now pressing 'T' will reset your time.

Daniel Pemberton, Surrey.

LINE OF FIRE

On the control options screen type 'OPERATION FERRET'. The screen should now change and you'll be totally invulnerable, with the ability to skip levels by pressing 0 – 9.

D.G. Evans, Bridgwater.

STRIDER 2

SCORE: 258
TIME: 425
LIVES 4
LEVEL 1

Start the game and type 'SWIFT'. A cheat icon should appear and now pressing 'E' will replenish Strider's energy, while 'D' will replenish the Strider robot's energy.

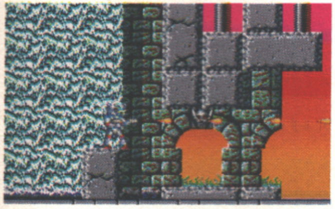
DG Evans.

Or Pause and hold down Left Shift, '1' and 'Help' for infinite lives.

Daniel Pemberton.

TURRICAN 2

On the title screen, tap the 'HELP' key, which should bring up a music menu. Now press 1, 4, 2, and 'Esc' twice to start the game with infinite lives and wall weapons.



Leo Staples, Southampton; Chris Cusack, Camberley; James Cutler, Bishop's Stortford; Paul Jolly, Newbury.

ATOMIC ROBOKID

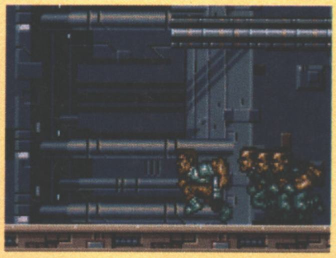
Type 'tuesday14th' and press fire on the title screen to access a cheat menu offering invincibility and other useful goodies.

TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY

Start the game and type 'ICANFLY' to be able to, er, fly.

Paul Jolly, Newbury.

TOTAL RECALL



Type 'LISTEN TO THE WHALES' on the title screen with Arnie's face on it. The picture should flip, and you'll now be immortal on the first level. For the second level, type either 'JIMI HENDRIX' or 'JIMMY HENDRIX'.

Paul Jolly.

CJ'S ELEPHANT ANTICS

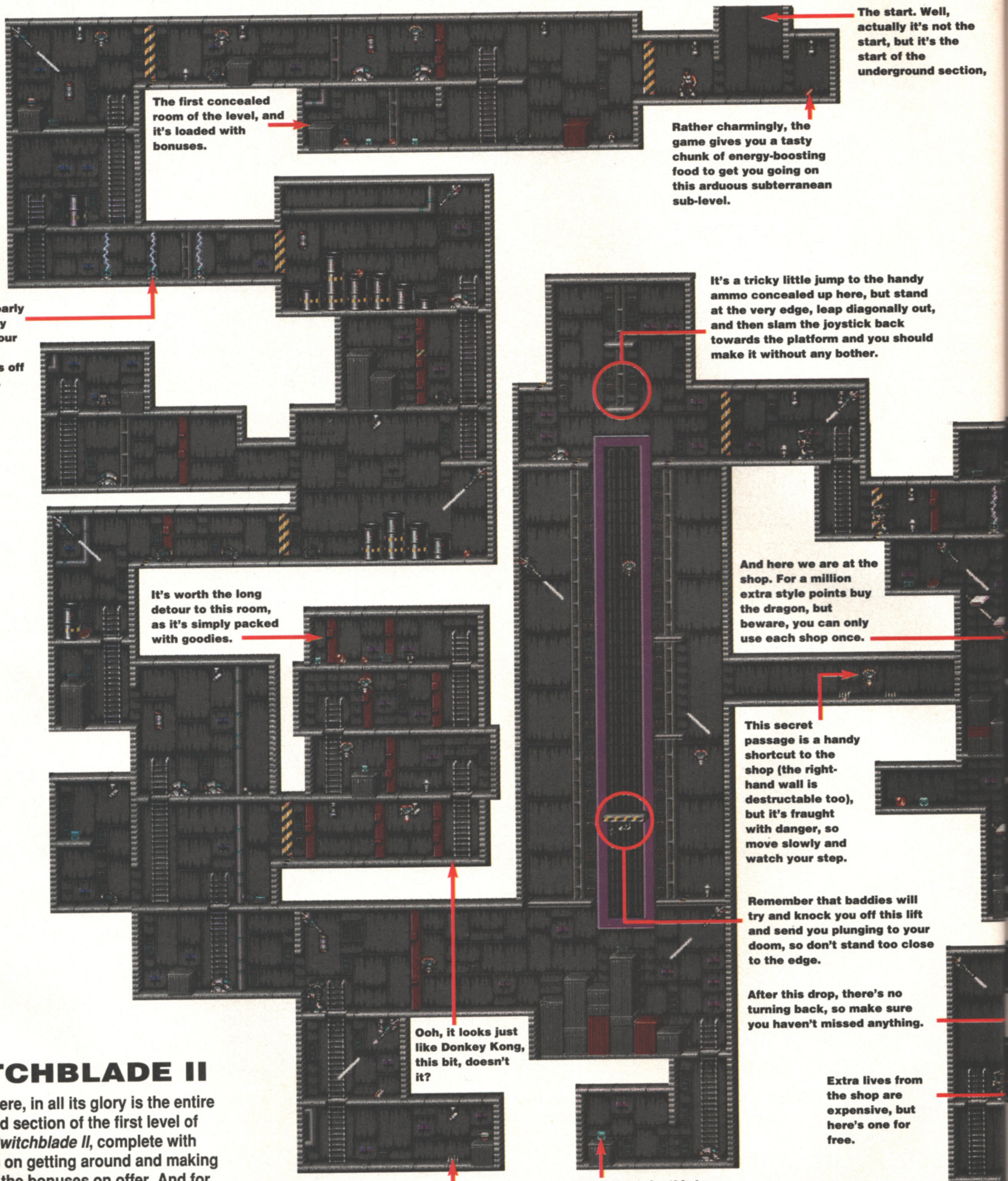
On the title screen type (printed backwards to save embarrassment) 'SELOHESRA YHCTI' for lovely infinite lives.

TOYOTA CELICA GT RALLY

At the beginning of each stage, press Control and the 'C' key at the same time. You can now finish the stage with a time of 00:00:00!

Nawal Bahal, Osterley.

Continued on page 50



The start. Well, actually it's not the start, but it's the start of the underground section,

Rather charmingly, the game gives you a tasty chunk of energy-boosting food to get you going on this arduous subterranean sub-level.

The first concealed room of the level, and it's loaded with bonuses.

These aren't nearly as mean as they look, just get your dagger out and chop the beams off at their source. Watch out immediately afterwards, though.

It's a tricky little jump to the handy ammo concealed up here, but stand at the very edge, leap diagonally out, and then slam the joystick back towards the platform and you should make it without any bother.

And here we are at the shop. For a million extra style points buy the dragon, but beware, you can only use each shop once.

It's worth the long detour to this room, as it's simply packed with goodies.

This secret passage is a handy shortcut to the shop (the right-hand wall is destructable too), but it's fraught with danger, so move slowly and watch your step.

Remember that baddies will try and knock you off this lift and send you plunging to your doom, so don't stand too close to the edge.

After this drop, there's no turning back, so make sure you haven't missed anything.

Ooh, it looks just like Donkey Kong, this bit, doesn't it?

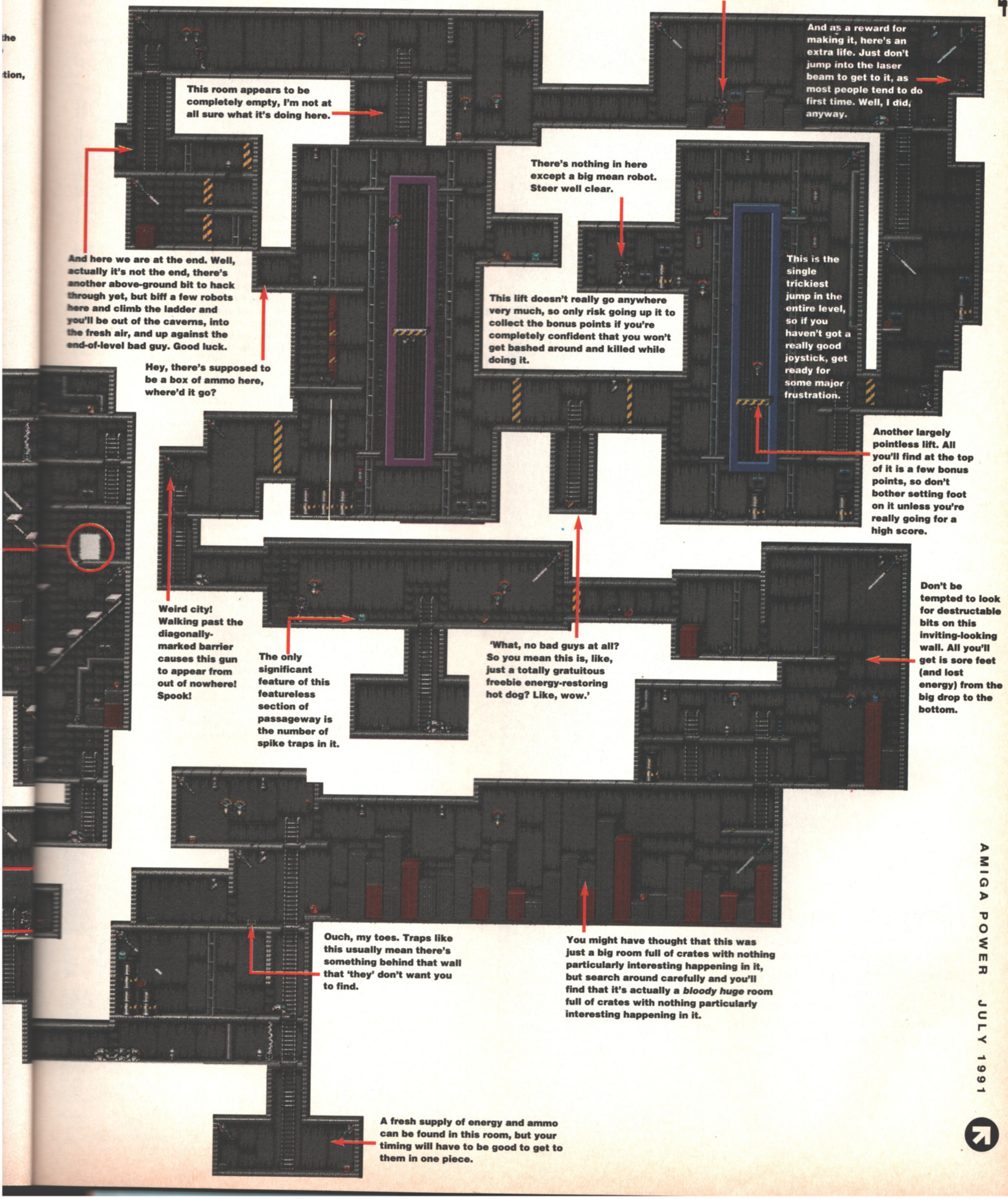
Extra lives from the shop are expensive, but here's one for free.

Yes, it's one of those sneaky spike traps that pop up when you least expect them.

Going down for this bonus is likely to cause you more pain than it's worth.

SWITCHBLADE II

Displayed here, in all its glory is the entire underground section of the first level of Gremlin's *Switchblade II*, complete with handy hints on getting around and making the most of the bonuses on offer. And for seasoned pros we've even included a guide to level two over the page.



I don't know, it's only a pizza, you'd think it was the Crown Jewels by the way this metal chap is guarding it. No matter, just stand on the crate above him and slash his tin head to bits from a position of complete safety. Easy. In fact, you could say it was a pizza cake...

And as a reward for making it, here's an extra life. Just don't jump into the laser beam to get to it, as most people tend to do first time. Well, I did, anyway.

This room appears to be completely empty, I'm not at all sure what it's doing here.

There's nothing in here except a big mean robot. Steer well clear.

And here we are at the end. Well, actually it's not the end, there's another above-ground bit to hack through yet, but biff a few robots here and climb the ladder and you'll be out of the caverns, into the fresh air, and up against the end-of-level bad guy. Good luck.

This is the single trickiest jump in the entire level, so if you haven't got a really good joystick, get ready for some major frustration.

This lift doesn't really go anywhere very much, so only risk going up it to collect the bonus points if you're completely confident that you won't get bashed around and killed while doing it.

Hey, there's supposed to be a box of ammo here, where'd it go?

Another largely pointless lift. All you'll find at the top of it is a few bonus points, so don't bother setting foot on it unless you're really going for a high score.

Don't be tempted to look for destructable bits on this inviting-looking wall. All you'll get is sore feet (and lost energy) from the big drop to the bottom.

Weird city! Walking past the diagonally-marked barrier causes this gun to appear from out of nowhere! Spook!

The only significant feature of this featureless section of passageway is the number of spike traps in it.

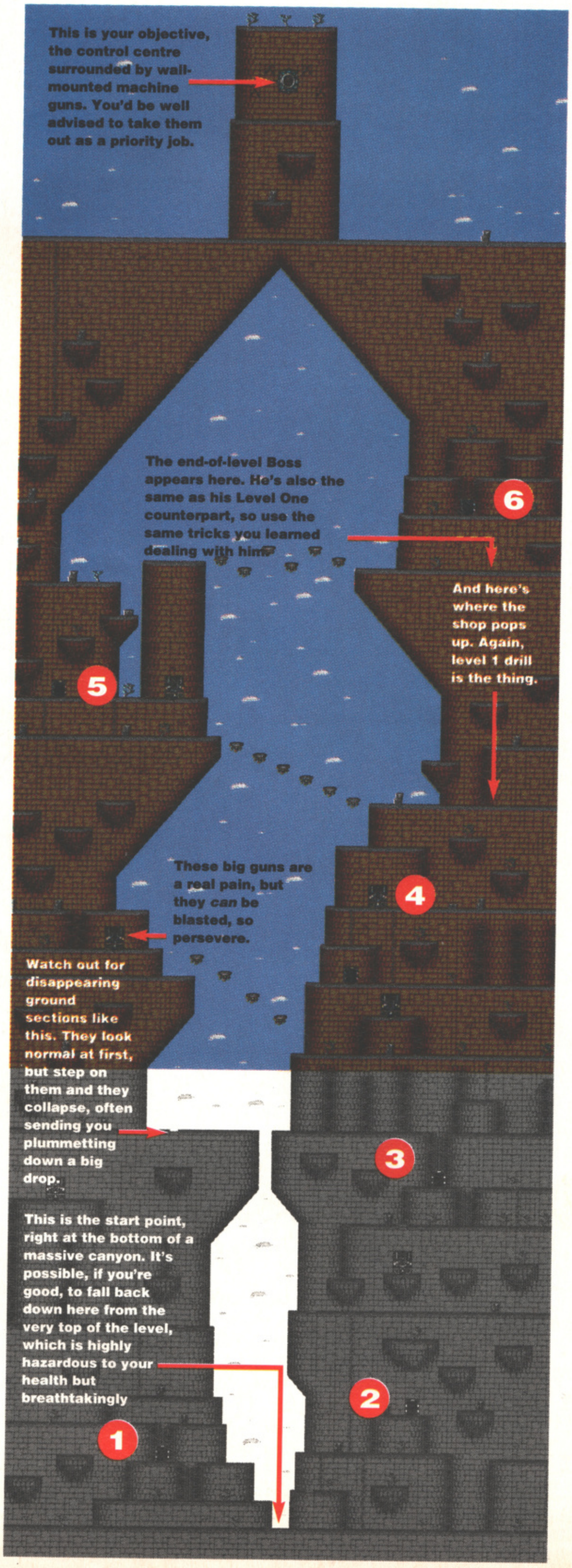
'What, no bad guys at all? So you mean this is, like, just a totally gratuitous freebie energy-restoring hot dog? Like, wow.'

Ouch, my toes. Traps like this usually mean there's something behind that wall that 'they' don't want you to find.

You might have thought that this was just a big room full of crates with nothing particularly interesting happening in it, but search around carefully and you'll find that it's actually a *bloody huge* room full of crates with nothing particularly interesting happening in it.

A fresh supply of energy and ammo can be found in this room, but your timing will have to be good to get to them in one piece.

This map of Level Two doesn't show any of the nasty bad guys as they're just the same as in Level One, with the exception of some winged meanies. These appear in the open-air sections between the cannon walls and try to knock you off the precarious platforms.



This is your objective, the control centre surrounded by wall-mounted machine guns. You'd be well advised to take them out as a priority job.

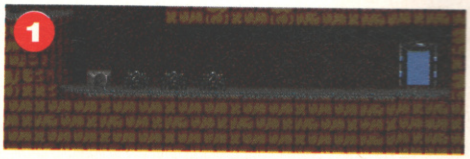
The end-of-level Boss appears here. He's also the same as his Level One counterpart, so use the same tricks you learned dealing with him.

And here's where the shop pops up. Again, level 1 drill is the thing.

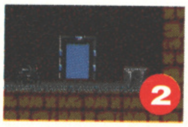
These big guns are a real pain, but they *can* be blasted, so persevere.

Watch out for disappearing ground sections like this. They look normal at first, but step on them and they collapse, often sending you plummetting down a big drop.

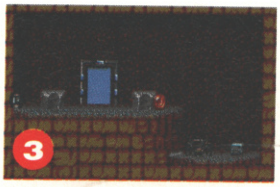
This is the start point, right at the bottom of a massive canyon. It's possible, if you're good, to fall back down here from the very top of the level, which is highly hazardous to your health but breathtakingly



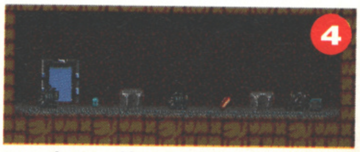
This is the first of Level Two's secret caves that you're likely to come across, and it's also the most lucrative. Simply hack your way past the three not-very-tough tanks and jump up to collect your lovely juicy extra life. Be careful, though, as just off the screen above the doorway, there's another tank which fires bullets down at you from its unassailable position. Then again, it fires bullets at the rate of about three a minute, so I wouldn't worry about it all that much if I was you. (Which I'm not).



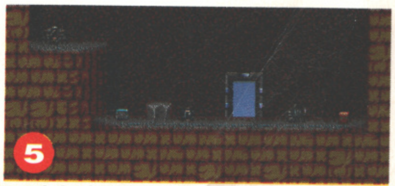
This rather cramped room ('compact and bijou, compact and bijou' - Switchblade Estate Agents Inc) is particularly notable for its gently abstract juxtapositioning of a tasty hot dog and a nasty tank. (Note the interesting way that 'nasty' and 'tasty' are almost exactly the same word, although bizarrely, they don't rhyme). Be ready to blast the tank the second you enter the room, or it'll give you an unpleasant welcome. The room's only other feature is the rocky outcrop to the right, which is, er, not all that interesting at all, really.



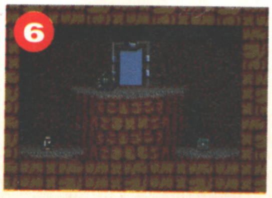
The third secret cave packs a lot of goodies into its limited confines. Here you'll find a power-up icon, one thousand lovely bonus points, and most usefully of all, a gorgeous big box of ammo, which by this stage of the level you're likely to be getting a bit short of. Jumping over the rock on the right makes you vulnerable to shots from the tank in the corner, so time your jump immediately after it's just fired a bullet and it shouldn't give you any problems. Of course, there's always the danger of landing on top of it, so – as in all of *Switchblade 2* but especially on this level – look quite a long time before you leap.



There's a horrible metal bug hiding right behind the door of this cave, so when you enter, make sure you face to the left and slash like crazy. Having taken him out, his little bug buddy won't present any problems whatsoever in getting to the life-restoring hot dog, but be mindful of the tank guarding the box of ammo in the corner – his bullets can be tricky to avoid in the low-ceiling environment of the cave. If you're ready for it, though, it won't give you too much of a hard time.



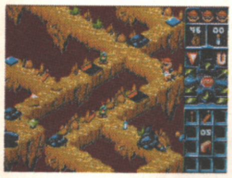
A sneaky old cave, this one. You walk in and it presents you with a floor full of fabby bonuses (a box of ammo, a power-up icon, and an energy-giving burger), guarded only by a pretty harmless robot insect. There's a tempting leap up to the left though, so up you bound, only to find that you've leapt straight into a mean ol' tank who just isn't pleased to see you at all. In fact, you're *persona non grata* to such a degree that he'll fill you full of lead in the twinkling of an eye, so your best bet is simply to grab the goodies and get the hell out of there just as fast as your little Blade Knight's legs will carry you.

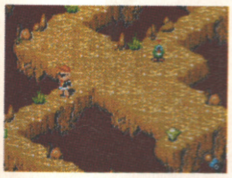


After dealing with the Boss, you'll probably be a bit short on ammo, so pop into this cave for a restock that you'll need to take on the control centre at the top of the canyon. Again, you'll need to be quick to take out the bug that will attempt to greet you with a spot of physical damage when you come in the door, but that's the only problem you'll have in this, erm, 'compact and bijou' little room.

BRAT

If you're still stuck even after last month's level codes, here are some more tips to help you get through Image Work's controversial (in this magazine, at least) release *Brat*. They've been specially prepared for us by the game's programmers, Foursfield.


Young Nathan's going to need plenty of dynamite here!

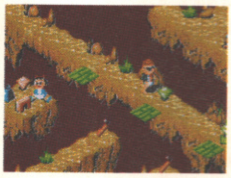

Use quiet bits like this to gather your wits.

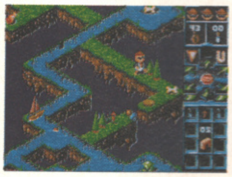
GENERAL

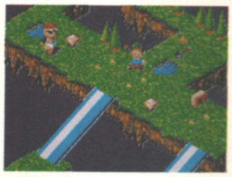
- You only need keep half an eye on the Brat's progress through Bratland. Don't watch him directly, but keep your attention at least three steps ahead. This gives you more time to respond to the 'Bratland Baddies'.

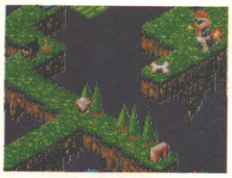
- Don't panic! Make full use of the Stop Scroll, Reverse Scroll and Stop Brat icons if things seem to be getting out of hand. This takes the pressure off, giving you time to think.

- Always try to collect any milk bottles – these allow Brat to bounce back into Bratland exactly where he fell off. To activate the bottles after a fall, just click the flashing bottle in the panel. You must do this before the countdown ends, or Brat will have fallen too far to retrieve and will lose a life.


Precise timing is required to collect all these goodies.


You can avoid all these water nasties – but mind the gap!


It's worth using a valuable Scroll Stop icon to collect all the kit on offer at this point.


Uh-oh, it looks like Nathan's taken a wrong turn here and no mistake!

- Don't waste bridges when another way around can be used – you may need them later. This is essential when you move deeper into Bratland.

- If your inventory is full and you reach an essential item, drop surplus supplies in front of you so that you can pick them up again as you go on.

- Use the rubber to get the money back on misplaced arrows and scroll icons – on later levels money is tight!

- Weights are extremely useful for blocking some 'Bratland Baddies' and also for toggling trapdoors or switches.

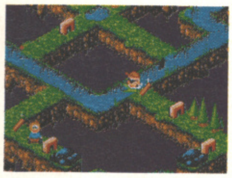
- Deeper in Bratland you will find hovering green bridges. These can only be walked onto when they are *not* moving. However Brat *can* step off a moving bridge – useful at times but it's generally fatal. Icons *must* be placed directly under Brat's feet when he is on a moving bridge!

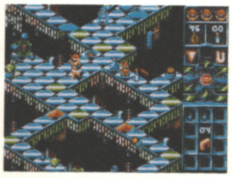
TOYTOWN

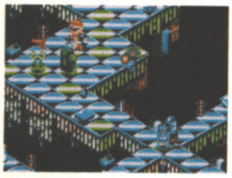
- Many of the baddies can be distracted from your route. Mice like cheese, but beware – once the mouse has finished the cheese he'll be back on your tracks. Watch out for the cheese getting smaller.

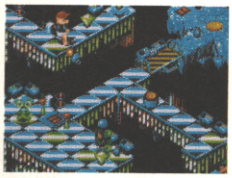
- Use the Green Cross Code when you arrive at a road. Placing 'lollipop poles' on the road *before* the car reaches it will stop the car for a time.

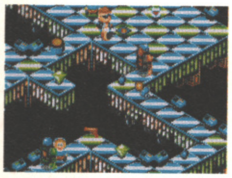
- A special tip particularly for the last level of Toytown. Spinning tops can be trapped by putting down a bridge piece on the edge of the pathway, letting a top move onto it and then blocking its exit with a weight. The weight can then be safely picked up again for re-use.


Swim like crazy (or get ready for a nasty bite!)


By the time you reach Moon Base, things get very busy!


Grabbing that gun should prove *very* useful...


Time is really tight at the start of this level, so hurry!


You'll need a cool head to get out of here in one piece.

PARK LAND

- A Stop Scroll helps to make the timing easier when jumping off roundabouts in Park Land.

- Drop meat to sharks as soon as they appear on screen – they may have gone before you arrive, but be careful. They'll come back when Brat is swimming and vulnerable.

- Submarines will check all directions for possible targets before they fire multiple torpedoes. Make allowance for this when timing the launching of submarines.

- Make sure you have a parachute before letting Brat walk onto the Blue Parachute Jump arrows because he will automatically jump off! (It gets very nasty if you haven't got one!)

- The dogs like lots of bones.

MOON BASE

- The circular homers on the Moon Base must be blown up before they reach home and open their trapdoors. Homers only move if they can see their destination point on screen, so Reverse Scroll can sometimes be useful to stop them in their tracks. Homers can be identified by their orange light – if this is flashing you are too late! Once they get home they are invulnerable!

- Weights can block the laser-bolt cannons. Carefully placed they can be picked up again when Brat walks past.

- The multiple switches on the moon base have a double-switching order, in the sequence Orange-Red-Green-Blue (eg Orange switches Orange *and* Red, Red switches Orange *and* Red *and* Green).

- Space Slugs will eat your arrows. As they do so they turn and face the direction in which the arrow is pointing – unless your arrow gives them indigestion, that is. Use this to point them away from Brat – if you don't he's in real danger of becoming horribly slug-slimed!

HOW TO WHACK THOSE BADDIES (OR JUST GET AWAY IN ONE PIECE)

Cars – Use lollipop poles or Dynamite (but that's harder).
Ducking birds – Stop before the bird and wait until he ducks his head three times – then go!
Mice – Cheese.
Dogs – Bones.
Spinning tops – Block with weight.
Toy soldiers – Rag dolls.
Jack in the box – Place weight on top.
Rock piles – Dynamite or grenades.
Large rock piles – Match to cannon after aim set by pressure pad.
Drawbridges – Toggle with Brat or weight.
Trap doors – Pressure pads.
Sharks – Hams.
Mines – Torpedo.
Yachts – Torpedo.
Hoppers – Drawing pin.
Stinkbomb – Aerosol.
Mole – Spade (he really whops his head!)
Model planes – Firework rockets.
Green robots – Grenades.
Red robots – Blue/yellow pass.
Force field gates – Appropriate coloured pass, placed on gate.
Airlocks – Pressure pads.
Meteor fire – Water pistols.
Green hoppy monster – Glue.
Green space orbs – Springs.
Cannon – Block with weight.
Space slug – Eats arrows and follows their direction.
Space mole – Drop weight on head when mole comes out of the ground. (Don't worry, he can take it!)
Drops – You're going to need a parachute.
Colour pads – These are coded. It's your job to make them all flash on.

MegaTraveller was quite a game. Reviewed last issue at a whopping 88 per cent, it forms the basis of what will no doubt become a long and successful series of computer games based on the Traveller role playing system. It's a remarkably accessible and playable game as it stands, but for those new to this form of game playing a little bit of help may come in very welcome. Over to those terribly nice Empire people...

● CREATING CHARACTERS AND PARTIES

This information should help you create the most balanced and well-prepared party you could hope for, capable of coping with the stickiest of situations...

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH (STR)
This refers to the character's physical power and also the weight of equipment they can carry. The land-based services require the highest strength ratings, as they are the areas where the characters receive training in ground combat. Anything less than a strength rating of 10 for these characters, or 8 for Merchants or the Navy, could leave them in a dangerous position, even if they don't participate in combat, so don't go out there with a gang of wimps.

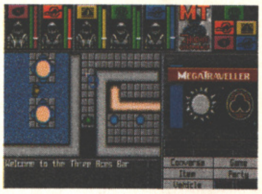
DEXTERITY (DEX)
All characters should have a dexterity rating of at least 8, no matter which service they belong to. Anything less will cause them to have serious difficulties in performing tasks efficiently.

ENDURANCE (END)
The minimum workable endurance rating for any character is 9 if they are to be able to use oxygen efficiently on any non-atmospheric world. In the case of combat characters, a 10 or 11 rating is helpful, though not absolutely necessary.

INTELLIGENCE (INT)
The intelligence rating combined with the education rating (see next section) determines the number of skills a character can receive during their military career. You'll need a minimum intelligence of 7 for each character, but remember, you may also get some extra points at the end of your military career from the benefits table.

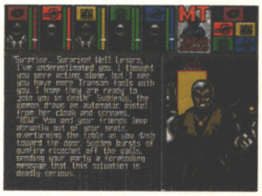
EDUCATION (EDU)
Again, don't try to get away with any ratings under 7. You wouldn't do it in real life, so don't do it in MegaTraveller.

SOCIAL STANDING (SOC)
Don't get carried away with this one. Middle ratings (6 or 7) are best, or your character's trading skills will be affected (would you want to haggle with the Duke Of Edinburgh?). Lower scores, though, may make it difficult to communicate with Non-Player Characters (NPCs).,so strike a balance between snooty and snotty.



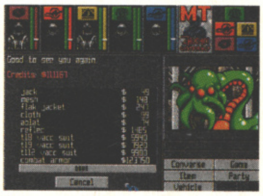
Welcome to the Three Aces Bar

A bar– a great place to get helpful (and free) information.



"Surprise... Surprise! Well Lenora, I've underestimated you. I thought you were acting alone, but I see you have more Transam fools with you. I hope they are ready to join you in death!" Suddenly, the woman draws an automatic pistol from her cloak and screams, "NOW!" You and your friends leap abruptly out of your seats, overturning the table as you dash toward the door. Sudden bursts of gunfire ricochet off the walls, sending your party a foreboding message that this situation is deadly serious.

This man wants to end your quest before it's even started.



```
Good to see you again
Credits $111167

jack               $     49
mesh               $    148
flak jacket        $    247
cloth              $     99
ablat              $     74
reflec             $   1485
t18 vacc suit      $   5940
t19 vacc suit      $   7920
t112 vacc suit     $   9900
combat armor       $123750
```

For your protection, a visit to the armour shop is advised.

MEGATRAVELLE

● CAREER OPPORTUNITIES – A GUIDE TO THE SERVICES

These are the pros and cons of each branch of the military. Use this information to select the best team for your chosen game strategy.

IMPERIAL NAVY
Advantages: The major strength of Navy training is that it provides a high level of skill in starship flight and combat. This is the best service in which to enlist the character who will be flying the Interloper and taking it into combat situations. The Navy also has a cash and benefits system a little better than the other services.
Disadvantages: it's difficult for characters to rise up through the ranks, and opportunities to develop ground combat skills are minimal.

MARINES
Advantages: Excellent ground combat training, and the possibility of some space combat skills too. Your character may also develop good social skills, which will help in conversing with NPCs. Increasing rank is also relatively easy.
Disadvantages: Marines gain little or no experience in navigation, piloting, vehicle operation or medicine. Also, their chance of surviving any injuries sustained during service is fairly low. The Marines have the lowest life expectancy of all the services.

ARMY
Advantages: Probably the best service for receiving both ground and space combat skills. Good training in vehicle operation, and some degree of instruction in tactics and communications too. The easiest service to increase rank in.
Disadvantages: No chance of starship piloting training, and medical skills are restricted. Cash benefits are also the lowest of all the services.

SCOUTS
Advantages: Good for all-round training, although biased in favour of space flight and combat training. Ground movement and combat are also reasonably well catered for, and re-enlistment is almost always granted. The Scouts have the best benefits, especially where cash is concerned.
Disadvantages: No real disadvantages. (Hurrah!)

MERCHANTS
Advantages: Obviously, Merchants develop the best trading skills. A Merchant character may also receive starship piloting training.
Disadvantages: It is very rare to get any ground combat training, and the chances of promotion are very slight.

GENERAL NOTES
When a character re-enlists in a branch of the military for a fifth term, they may begin to lose points in Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance. After nine terms, advancing age will also bring about a reduction in Intelligence ratings.

● The following skills can be acquired during a character's military career, but are not used at any stage during MegaTraveller 1, so try not to select any of them or you'll be wasting valuable skill points.
Admin
Aircraft
Combat Engineering
Electronics
Forgery
Grav Belt
Gravitics
High Energy Weapons
High-G Environment
Interrogation
Intrusion
Jet-Propelled Aircraft
Linguistics
Mechanical
Recon
Robot Ops
Robotics
Sciences
Sensor Ops
Screens
Ship's Boat
Steward
Survey
Survival
Zero-G Environment

● These skills, however, are among the most frequently used, so select these where possible:
ATV
Bribery
Communications
Computer
Engineering
Grav Vehicle
Heavy Weapons
Vacc Suit
Laser Weapons

POLICE ON MY BACK

These are the law levels for all the game's planets. Planets with high levels will confiscate all your weapons at the starport, although you can always smuggle one through (see pages 80 and 89 of the player's manual). Your characters will only be arrested on planets with a level of 6 or higher,so you can pretty much blast away at whoever you like (or don't like). If arrested your best bet is to use an Imperial Release.

EFATE SYSTEM
Efate - 0
Stur - 3
Solon - 4
Llun - 1
San - 5
Kra - 0

LOUZY SYSTEM
Louzy - 8
Ilantir - 8
Quan - A (10)
Iroth - 0

ALELL SYSTEM
Alell - C (12)
Anparr - 0
Straun - 0

BOUGHENE SYSTEM
Boughene - 1
Neaere - 5
Pocoon - 5

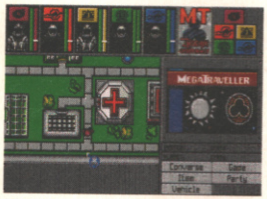
MENORB SYSTEM
Menorb - 8
Beormn - 5

PIXIE SYSTEM
Pixie - 3
Chiros - 0
Streech - 0

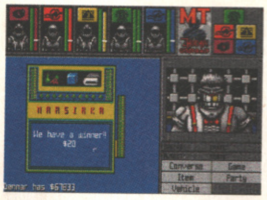
UAKYE SYSTEM
Uakye - 8
Sino - 0
Arrica - B (11)

YRES SYSTEM
Yres - 7
Cheika - 0
Akarates - 5
Chayke - 6

R 1

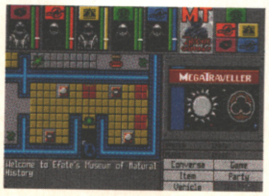


After the start sequence, you'll probably need to go here.



We have a winner! $20

A casino – a great place to lose all of your dosh.



Welcome to Erate's Museum of Natural History

Some buildings are much larger inside than on the outside.

INTERESTING-VILLE, ARIZONA

The systems below contain a few miscellaneous places that you might find it interesting to explore.

LOUZY SYSTEM - The planet Quan contains two tents, one located directly above the starport, and the other east of the starport on the other side of the planet.

ALELL SYSTEM - On Iroth there is a wrecked ship south-west of the starport.

PIXIE SYSTEM - On Streech you can find a cave to the north-west of the starport.

UAKYE SYSTEM - Trekking east of the starport on Sino for a while will bring you to a maze in the mountains.

YRES SYSTEM - Lucky old Yres has two Interesting planets, Cheika has a cave to the north-east of the starport, while Chayke is blessed with a wrecked spaceship which can be found south-west of the starport.

TRADING PLACES

If you're planning on making your fortune by trading around the systems, you'll need to know the prices that all the commodities will sell for at all the starports. (These prices also apply to cargo which has been obtained by pirating.)

STREECHEN WINE
Boughene - 7456
Louzy - 3640
Uakye - 3450
Pixie - 2880
Menorb - 2800
Efate - 2280
Yres - 2175
Llun - 2160
Quan - 1980
Chiros - 1952
Alell - 1950
Iroth - 1860
Pocoon - 1815

FOODSTUFF
Boughene - 480
Louzy - 2340
Uakye - 1950
Pixie - 2000
Menorb - 1400
Efate - 680
Yres - 675
Llun - 960
Quan - 880
Chiros - 852
Alell - 450
Iroth - 660
Pocoon - 715

GRAIN
Boughene - 160
Louzy - 2080
Uakye - 1650
Pixie - 960
Menorb - 1120
Efate - 360
Yres - 375
Llun - 720
Quan - 660
Chiros - 632
Alell - 150
Iroth - 420
Pocoon - 495

WATER
Boughene - 50
Louzy - 3390
Uakye - 1050
Pixie - 320
Menorb - 560
Efate - 50
Yres - 50
Llun - 240
Quan - 1200
Chiros - 192
Alell - 50
Iroth - 50
Pocoon -55

SPICES
Boughene - 50
Louzy - 1560
Uakye - 1050
Pixie - 320
Menorb - 240
Efate - 50
Yres - 50
Llun - 240
Quan - 220
Chiros - 192
Alell - 50
Iroth - 50
Pocoon -55

STEEL
Boughene - 80
Louzy - 660
Uakye - 1575
Pixie - 680
Menorb - 1105
Efate - 320
Yres - 1050
Llun - 715
Quan - 605
Chiros - 1430
Alell - 637
Iroth - 1140
Pocoon - 715

NONMETAL ORES
Boughene - 400
Louzy - 975
Uakye - 1875
Pixie - 1000
Menorb - 1050
Efate - 640
Yres - 1350
Llun - 900
Quan - 825
Chiros - 1650
Alell - 937
Iroth - 1380
Pocoon - 935

IRON
Boughene - 50
Louzy - 195
Uakye - 975
Pixie - 50
Menorb - 210
Efate - 50
Yres - 450
Llun - 180
Quan - 165
Chiros - 990
Alell - 50
Iroth - 660
Pocoon - 275

SPECIAL ALLOYS
Boughene - 1040
Louzy - 1495
Uakye - 2475
Pixie - 1640
Menorb - 1610
Efate - 1280
Yres - 1950
Llun - 1380
Quan - 1265
Chiros - 2090
Alell - 1537
Iroth - 1860
Pocoon - 1375

RADIOACTIVES
Boughene - 1040
Louzy - 1495
Uakye - 2475
Pixie - 1640
Menorb - 1610
Efate - 1280
Yres - 1950
Llun - 1380
Quan - 1265
Chiros - 2090
Alell - 1537
Iroth - 1860
Pocoon - 1375

PHARMACEUTICALS
Boughene - 3600
Louzy - 2112
Uakye - 3450
Pixie - 2800
Menorb - 2380
Efate - 3400
Yres - 3750
Llun - 5620
Quan - 2612
Chiros - 2200
Alell - 2437
Iroth - 2760
Pocoon - 2420

SHIP SUPPLIES
Boughene - 2960
Louzy - 1592
Uakye - 2850
Pixie - 2160
Menorb - 1820
Efate - 2760
Yres - 3150
Llun - 2040
Quan - 2172
Chiros - 1760
Alell - 1837
Iroth - 2280
Pocoon - 1980

TOOLS
Boughene - 2000
Louzy - 812
Uakye - 1950
Pixie - 1200
Menorb - 980
Efate - 1800
Yres - 2250
Llun - 1320
Quan - 1512
Chiros - 1100
Alell - 937
Iroth - 1560
Pocoon - 1320

PETROCHEMICALS
Boughene - 2640
Louzy - 1332
Uakye - 2550
Pixie - 1840
Menorb - 1540
Efate - 2440
Yres - 2850
Llun - 1800
Quan - 1952
Chiros - 1540
Alell - 1537
Iroth - 2040
Pocoon - 1760

EXPLOSIVES
Boughene - 2960
Louzy - 1592
Uakye - 2850
Pixie - 2160
Menorb - 1820
Efate - 4400
Yres - 3150
Llun - 2040
Quan - 2172
Chiros - 1760
Alell - 1837
Iroth - 2280
Pocoon - 1980

ELECTRONIC PARTS
Boughene - 1320
Louzy - 1235
Uakye - 1350
Pixie - 1720
Menorb - 1190
Efate - 2240
Yres - 1800
Llun - 2040
Quan - 1320
Chiros - 1320
Alell - 2175
Iroth - 1440
Pocoon - 1320

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
Boughene - 2280
Louzy - 2015
Uakye - 2250
Pixie - 2680
Menorb - 2280
Efate - 3200
Yres - 2700
Llun - 2760
Quan - 1980
Chiros - 1980
Alell - 3075
Iroth - 5100
Pocoon - 1980

HI-TECH PARTS
Boughene - 2600
Louzy - 2275
Uakye - 2550
Pixie - 3000
Menorb - 2310
Efate - 3520
Yres - 5800
Llun - 3000
Quan - 2200
Chiros - 2200
Alell - 3375
Iroth - 2400
Pocoon - 2200

COMPUTERS
Boughene - 2280
Louzy - 2015
Uakye - 2250
Pixie - 2680
Menorb - 2030
Efate - 3200
Yres - 2700
Llun - 2760
Quan - 1980
Chiros - 5600
Alell - 3075
Iroth - 2160
Pocoon - 1980

ROBOTS
Boughene - 2600
Louzy - 2275
Uakye - 2550
Pixie - 3000
Menorb - 2310
Efate - 3520
Yres - 3000
Llun - 3000
Quan - 2200
Chiros - 2200
Alell - 3375
Iroth - 2400
Pocoon - 2200

ANIMAL COMPOUNDS
Boughene - 1360
Louzy - 2405
Uakye - 900
Pixie - 960
Menorb - 840
Efate - 960
Yres - 900
Llun - 720
Quan - 660
Chiros - 50
Alell - 1275
Iroth - 120
Pocoon - 110

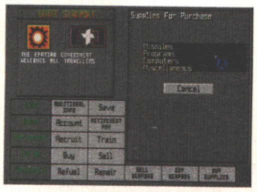
LIVESTOCK
Boughene - 2000
Louzy - 2925
Uakye - 4000
Pixie - 1600
Menorb - 1400
Efate - 1600
Yres - 1500
Llun - 1200
Quan - 1100
Chiros - 50
Alell - 1870
Iroth - 600
Pocoon - 550

FERTILIZERS
Boughene - 1040
Louzy - 2145
Uakye - 600
Pixie - 640
Menorb - 560
Efate - 640
Yres - 600
Llun - 480
Quan - 440
Chiros - 50
Alell - 975
Iroth - 50
Pocoon -50

PLANT COMPOUNDS
Boughene - 1360
Louzy - 2405
Uakye - 900
Pixie - 960
Menorb - 840
Efate - 960
Yres - 900
Llun - 720
Quan - 660
Chiros - 50
Alell - 1275
Iroth - 120
Pocoon - 110

LUMBER
Boughene - 720
Louzy - 1885
Uakye - 300
Pixie - 320
Menorb - 280
Efate - 320
Yres - 300
Llun - 240
Quan - 220
Chiros - 50
Alell - 675
Iroth - 50
Pocoon -50

STARRGHRITE
Boughene - 3360
Louzy - 2405
Uakye - 1950
Pixie - 2560



THE EFATIAN GOVERNMENT WELCOMES ALL TRAVELLERS

The spaceport – one of the trading places.

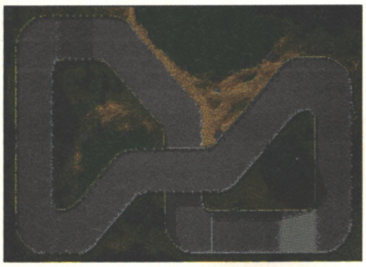
Menorb - 2590
Efate - 2560
Yres - 240
Llun - 1920
Quan - 1485
Chiros - 1760
Alell - 3420
Iroth - 1920
Pocoon - 1760

CLOTHING
Boughene - 1440
Louzy - 845
Uakye - 150
Pixie - 640
Menorb - 910
Efate - 640
Yres - 600
Llun - 480
Quan - 165
Chiros - 440
Alell - 975
Iroth - 480
Pocoon - 440

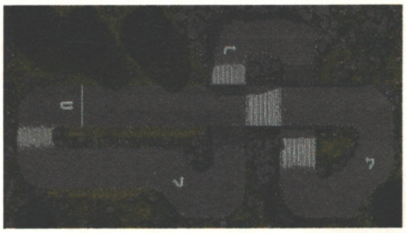
RAW CRYSTALS
Boughene - 3040
Louzy - 2145
Uakye - 1650
Pixie - 2240
Menorb - 2310
Efate - 2240
Yres - 2100
Llun - 1680
Quan - 1265
Chiros - 1540
Alell - 2475
Iroth - 1680
Pocoon - 3450

TEXTILES
Boughene - 2720
Louzy - 1885
Uakye - 1350
Pixie - 1920
Menorb - 2030
Efate - 1920
Yres - 1800
Llun - 1440
Quan - 1045
Chiros - 1320
Alell - 2175
Iroth - 1440
Pocoon - 1320

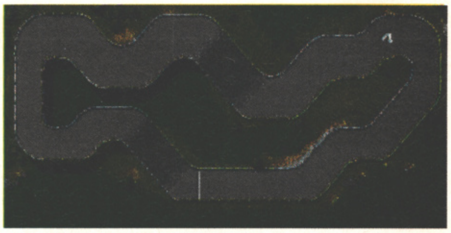
ENTERTAINMENT
Boughene - 2080
Louzy - 1365
Uakye - 750
Pixie - 1280
Menorb - 1470
Efate - 1280
Yres - 1200
Llun - 960
Quan - 605
Chiros - 880
Alell - 1575
Iroth - 960
Pocoon - 880



① No problems – just save your missiles and avoid collisions.



② Try to master turning the upper-left corner to save time. Make sure you're clear of trouble at the jump.

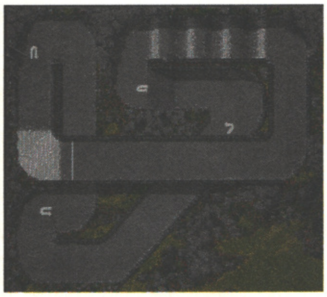


③ Again avoid collisions and try to nudge cars out on corners to get past.

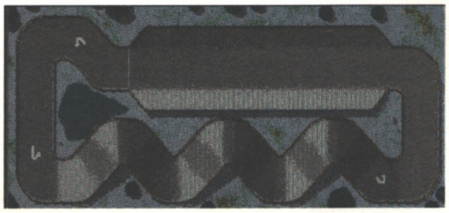
SUPERCARS II

Each track in Gremlin's recent – and ultra-successful – *Supercars II* is different and demands rethinking your tactics to get it completed it in a good time. Knowing what's coming up so that you can prepare for it can be incredibly useful, so what could be better than having all the courses laid out before you so you can study them at your leisure? Not much, we think you'll find, so – coincidence or what? – that's exactly what we've got here!

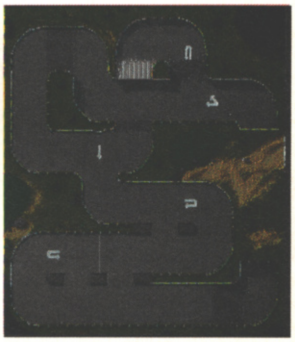
EASY LEVEL



① No problems – handbrake turn on the the tight corners to save slowing down.

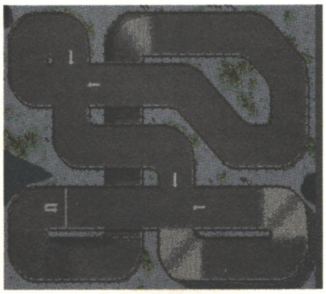


② Just avoid collisions on the chicanes, even if it means driving slower. Collisions could slow you down and let other cars get away from you.

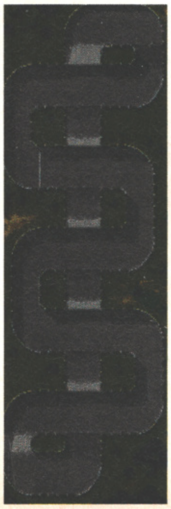


③ A choice again, but the 'jump' way saves a lot of time. Look ahead to see if the gates are open – don't wait for them.

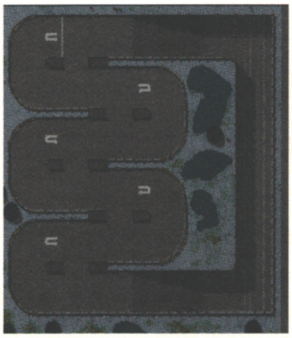
MEDIUM LEVEL



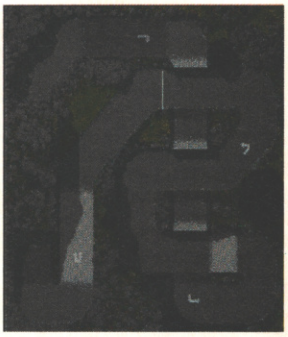
① Use front missiles on the long straight if necessary, but mainly just be wary of crossovers.



② If you are going to crash on the jump, do it on the first race or you will be put back, faster than you could probably drive. Otherwise, as usual, just make sure you have got a clear run.

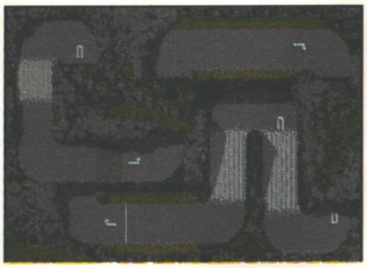


③ Take the shortcuts as they come – don't wait for them. It's up to you with the train – either look to see if it's there then go for it, or just go for it anyway. Remember you can sit on the right of it while it goes past.

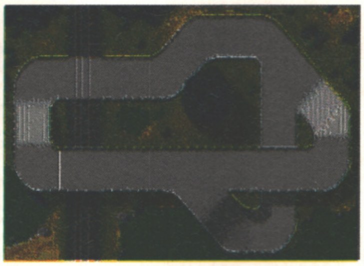


④ Just master the art of doing the triple jump. Super missiles are useful in the tunnel.

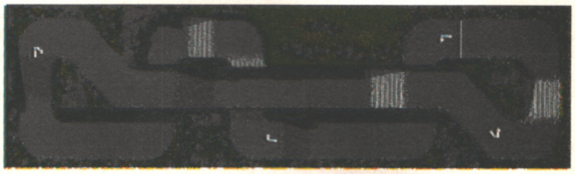
HARD LEVEL



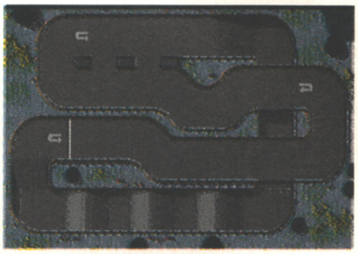
4 Lots of tunnels – just watch the way the screen moves if you're stuck (it should be fairly obvious). Super missiles are useful, and beware that enemy cars are armed with mines.



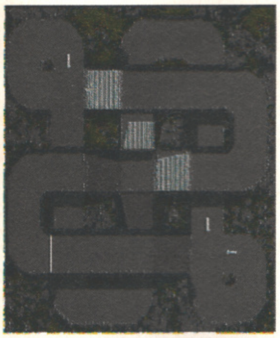
5 You have a choice of routes – going straight on at the intersection is usually best unless circumstances force you to do otherwise.



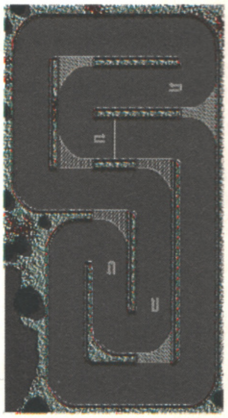
6 Lots of tight corners, but the real problem is the jump. Make sure you are clear of other cars and approach at full speed in the centre of the road. Turn at the right time and you should take off straight. And that's it. Simple.



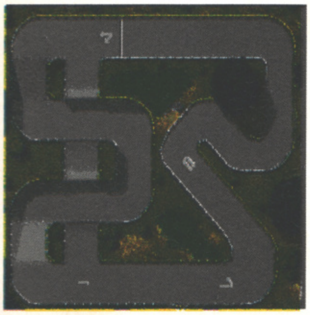
7 Again, homers are useful. Save time by going through the shortcuts but be careful not to get squashed. Spend all your remaining cash.



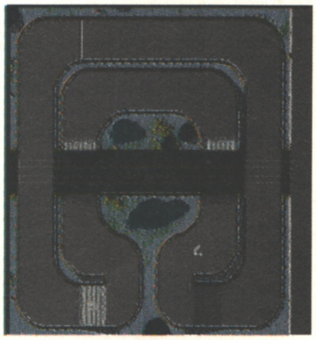
4 It looks difficult but all you need to remember is where the jump is and to take your time at crossovers. Homers once again prove useful.



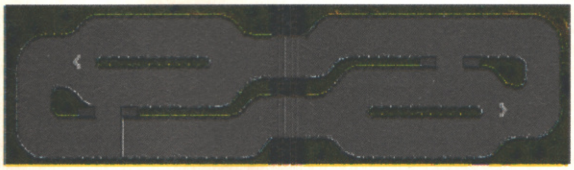
5 Do not get pushed off the course or you will be penalised a lap. Otherwise, race round at top speed making full use of the handbrake turns.



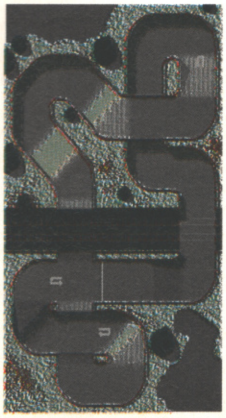
6 Again, the jump choice is much faster, but beware – if you take it too fast you will jump over the second take-off point.



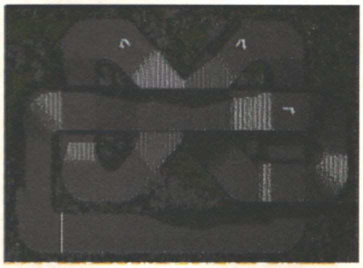
7 Not much time to see the trains coming so, since it's the last course, spend lots and lots of cash on homers and turbo jumps so you can leap over them all.



5 This time it is usually worth waiting for the gates to open, but that is easier said than done. A large supply of turbo jumps are essential to jump the trains.



6 Get the correct angle at the bottom-right loop corner and you should be able to jump okay. Unfortunately, there's not much you can do about the crossover.



7 Careful how you line up the jumps, they're very deceptive. Get lots of homers and, surprisingly enough, front missiles for this one. Shoot them off as you jump to take out any of the other cars thinking about knocking you off course.

TEST DRIVE 2

Type 'GAS' at any stage to go straight to the gas station.

Christian Clarke, Twickenham.

THE KILLING CLOUD

When the game asks for a mission code, enter '1 KILLING'. This will give you 28 nets and 29 PUPs.

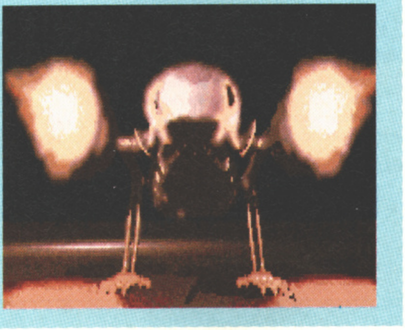
Ross Dadley, Feltham.

E-SWAT

Pause and type 'JUSTIFIED ANCIENTS OF MU MU' for infinite lives.

Daniel Pemberton.

THE KILLING GAME SHOW



When the 'GOOD LUCK...PRESS FIRE TO CONTINUE' screen appears, press 'Help' to reveal a map of the level.

Paul Barker, Darlington.

LEGEND OF FAERGHIL

Here are the answers to some of the questions and riddles you'll be asked while you're rummaging around in the dungeons of Faerghil.

In the ELVEN PALACE:
Q. *WHO IS FINDAL'S YOUNGEST UNCLE?*

Answer - *SCAGNAR*

Q. *WHO IS FINDAL'S FATHER?*

Answer - *FINDAIL*

Q. *WHO IS FINDAL'S GREAT UNCLE?*

Answer - *TEORLIN*

Q. *WHO IS FINDAL'S GREAT PARENT?*

Answer - *ALGANOR*

In the DRAGONSERVANT'S TEMPLE:
Q. *WHAT LIES BETWEEN MYSELF AND MY OPPOSITE?*

Answer - *AND*

In the CASTLE:
Q. *WHAT TRIES TO GO UP, BUT STOPS SHORT, HAS BUT ONE FOOT, AND CANNOT WALK?*

Answer - *STAIRS*

In the RUINS OF ANCIENT ORACLE:
Q. *THE MORE IT GETS, THE MORE IT EATS, AND HAS IT EATEN ALL, IT DIES. WHAT IS IT?*

Answer - *FIRE*

Q. *A FATHER'S CHILD, A MOTHER'S CHILD, BUT SON OF NONE – WHAT IS IT?*

Answer - *DAUGHTER*

Q. *I TALK WITHOUT SOUL, I HEAR WITHOUT EARS, I TALK WITHOUT MOUTH, AND I'M BORN IN THE AIR. WHAT AM I?*

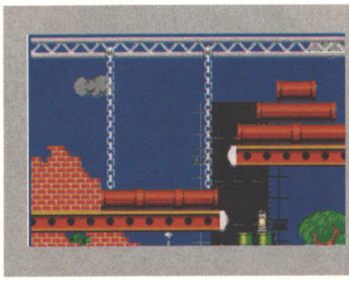
Answer - *ECHO*

Q. *TWO LITTLE WINDOWS, THEY HAVE NO GLASS, THEY STAND TOGETHER LIKE FLOWERS IN GRASS. TWO LITTLE WINDOWS, THEY SHOW US THE WORLD, THEY SHOW US THE STARS, THE FOREST, THE FIELD, THE FOLD. WHAT COULD THEY BE?*

Answer - *EYES*

Paul Hardy, Sheffield.

CAR-VUP



For infinite lives type 'R.J. TOONE' on the high score table.

Daniel Pemberton.

CHUCK ROCK

On the title screen (the one with the rock band on it) hit Esc, then type: 'FAST AINT THE WORD' or 'UNCLE SAMS' or 'ITS FAIRY BOWBELZ' or 'SHE LOVES CLEANING WINDOWS' or 'LIFE IS MY DREAM' for infinite energy.

To select zones in levels type 'MORTIMER' during play and use the function keys to select.
To select levels type 'TURN FRAME' and use keys 1 – 5 to select.
To be able to fly, type 'ESTRANO'.

Mike O'Brien, Haverfordwest.

Next month in Complete Control: *Gods, The Secret Of Monkey Island* and more!

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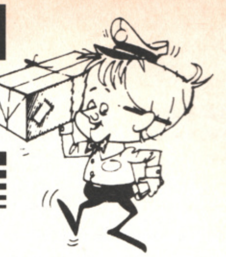

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JUST WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT CDTV?

Colin Campbell tries to figure it out...

Most of us are capable of recognising an outrageous hype campaign when we see one – but equally, most of us are perfectly capable of falling for its charms. Not having seen Dances With Wolves, say, can quickly become a social handicap, just as having played *Xenon II* on CDTV seems to be fast becoming a measure of computer gaming status these days.

So, CDTV. What is it exactly (magazine articles, word of mouth and even Commodore's own adverts are disturbingly vague on this point) and why exactly has it lodged itself obstinately at the very pinnacle of the ever-changing 'Next Big Thing' league? And – even more to the point – why should it be of any great interest to readers of AMIGA POWER?

As with all hype campaigns there are disciples and there are detractors, all of whom have managed to confuse the hell out of you, me, and even the machine's manufacturer Commodore. Look just below the surface though and you'll find things are surprisingly simple. Read on, and we'll explain all...

First off then, what exactly is a CDTV? Well, simply this: it's an Amiga rigged up to a Compact Disc player, all tucked away in a pretty black box. To play, simply take a game CD, insert it into the CD drive, and grab the joystick.

And that's all it does, in the main. In actual fact CDTV is little more than a very good, very swish looking games computer. Ignore attempts to explain concepts like 'interactive multimedia experience' – you'd have to have a pretentious streak a mile wide to fall in with the curious notion that, to be deemed a success, CDTV must be regarded as an incomprehensible phenomenon on a par with Stonehenge. At least half the stuff you'll ever hear or read about CDTV is pure hogwash.

So why all the fuss?

Well, imagine someone sneaked into your house, trashed your Amiga disk drive, and replaced it with a CD drive (complete with a wide range of games CDs). You would hardly be banging off letters to Crimewatch would you? After all, instead of that fussy and noisy old drive, you've got yourself a nice slick Compact Disc player that can run games (provided such a thing as games CDs existed, which we'll assume for the moment) not to mention double up playing music CDs when you're bored of killing things. Even better, you'd also be able to sample serious CD software, but we'll come to that later. Basically then, you wouldn't have lost anything, but you'd have gained a lot. So what's a lot? Well, for a start, large games would no longer require two or three (or even eight!) disks – everything would fit onto the one CD. That wretched chore of disk swapping would soon become a thing for nostalgia freaks or poor relatives only. When you gave it a whirl you wouldn't find any noticeable change in graphic display – it's still an Amiga, and these are still

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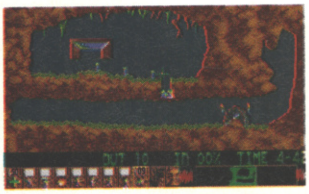
Bundled free with CDTV

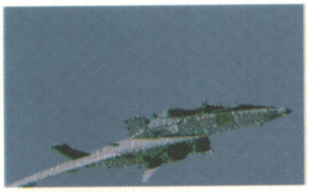
LEMMINGS
Psygnosis

It's exactly the same as the Amiga version we love so dearly. Somewhat disappointingly, we had more fun with this than anything prepared with the CDTV in mind. It's a shame really, because an even better *Lemmings* would have shown us how CDTV differs from the Amiga. In the event, this rather proves our point; apart from the obvious apparatus, CDTV simply really isn't all that different to the Amiga.

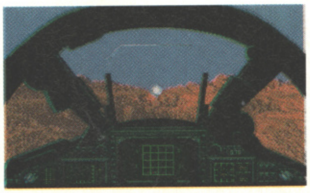


Identical to the original Amiga version, but nonetheless wonderful, those kamikaze *Lemmings* need your help.

PLANETSIDE
Psygnosis

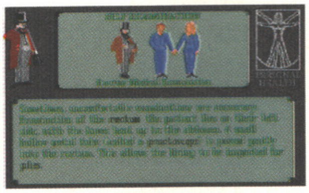


It's a wholly non-playable but astonishingly fast demo of forthcoming game *Planetside*. The aircraft whizzes along beautifully grim landscapes...

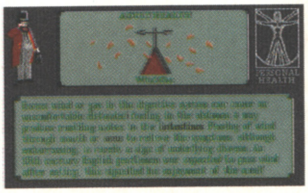


...while attempting to avoid lurking enemies. Your control system is ultra state-of-the-art, but (for now) it's look and don't touch. The full game should be out early next year.

DR WELLMAN – A GUIDE TO GOOD HEALTH



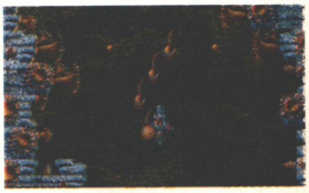
You can point and click your way through your anatomy. It's all here, everything from how to brush your teeth right through to the sordid secrets of Gonorrhea.



Each section contains written and spoken advice on all manner of problems. But the drawings are sub-standard, and the advice is, at best, bleeding obvious.

XENON 2
Image Works
£29.99

Vertically scrolling kill-'em-all from those Bitmap fellows. Fast, loud and lots of fun. It also contains a slim element of strategy (in as much as you get to choose how huge your weapons should be).



***Xenon 2* given (yet) another lease of life, courtesy of CDTV.**

Amiga games after all – but you would find that games are bigger, much bigger. And getting around them takes less time. All of the hitches which made you want to kick and scream have been eliminated.

Anyone who claims this is not the way to the future is a fool, but, as with all joyous innovations, there are setbacks. With CDTV – a device designed to do everything we've outlined above - it's not the technology which causes any problems (it's all tried and tested equipment packaged in a different way, after all), but the frightfully uninteresting question of market forces, best discussed by men in suits.

The remarkably compact CDTV system, with associated remote controllers.

Nevertheless, to get a fix on CDTV we must, for a brief moment, get inside the mind of the person whose job it is to persuade thee and me to fork out a whacking £600 on a home computer. (For that's how much it costs). Naturally, our man (for it is a he) is a mid-Atlantic businessman and therefore prone to corporatese. He's always saying things like 'It's a synergetic mixing of graphics, video, music, text and sound. It's a step forward for the interactive multimedia entertainment generation. It's the gateway to the 21st Century,' which sounds pretty enough, but doesn't quite explain what the beast can do.

In truth, it can do much less than an Amiga would if it ran huge storage floppy disks. The magic isn't in the machine, it's in the CD.

One silver disk can hold 550Mb of information which, quite stunningly, is the equivalent of 700 Amiga floppy disks! Not bad eh? This, in turn, means that software developers can chuck all the music, graphics, text and sound that make up the most complex games onto the CD, mix it all up, and have space to spare. The only annoying aspect of the CD is that you can't write to it, which is hardly catastrophic if you're just playing games. You can move about games swiftly, but, perversely, disc access is far from perfect. Bear in mind that it's a 1Mb machine, which might be required to continuously access different areas of a 550Mb CD. Even so, once the program is snugly nestling inside CDTV it zips along at a jaunty rate.

Our grey-suited man knows all this, but he's

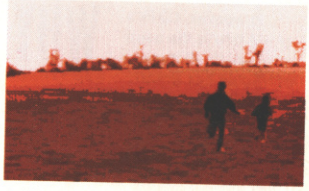
PSYCHO KILLER

On-Line

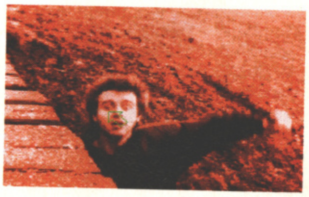
£29.99

Everybody loves a gory horror movie, so wouldn't it be fun to actually call the shots in an interactive blood and guts gore-fest? *Psycho Killer* consists of a bad guy, a good guy, a couple of weapons, the silliest dialogue since Halloween III, and a collection of commendably appalling digitised pictures.

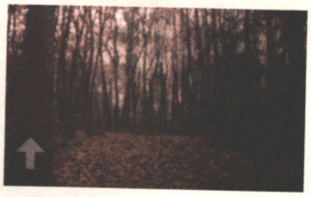
You control by clicking on either direction buttons or on objects on screen. We begin. 'It was a cold November day...' From there it's all down hill...



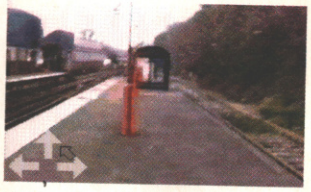
1. What have we here? It looks suspiciously like a mad–dog psycho whose hobbies include leaping around in camp fashion, while carving people up into lumps of unpleasantness.



2. Our friend is wielding a machete, you're wielding a pair of Reeboks (£39.95 from Olympic Sports). You click on nutty boy's teeth and our hero blurts 'Eat my Reeboks, Freak Face'. Oh boy.



3. Plenty of gameplay here. Point at the arrow, click and go forwards. Keep doing this randomly until you get to an interesting bit. You're bound to get on the right track sooner or later (maybe).



5. The madman is behind you. Should you stand still and wait to be redesigned? Or should you get the hell away from Captain Mincemeat? I know. Let's go down the video shop...

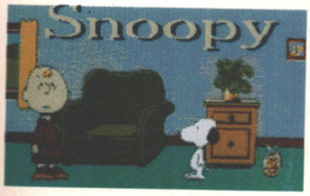
Most of the first CDTV games will be instantly familiar to you, because all the best classics are being re-mastered on CD format. Some (but precious few) are being updated. But at least with these CDs, you'll know what you're getting...

SNOOPY

The Edge

£29.99

Simplistic and pretty cartoon adventure which should appeal to youngsters. Unfortunately, that Charlie Brown humour is sadly lacking.



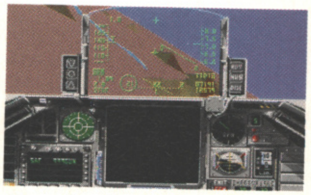
'Oh brother.' Everybody's favourite beagle will soon make the transition from Amiga to CDTV.

FALCON

Mirror Image

£49.99

Stupendous flight simulation which, despite its advancing years, should not be consigned to the aircraft boneyard just yet. We're hoping to see some real improvements over the original Amiga version.



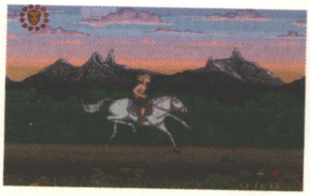
Mirrorsoft's *Falcon* is still regarded as one of the best all-round flight simulations on the Amiga.

WRATH OF THE DEMON

Entertainment International

£29.99

Great arcade adventure absolutely jam–packed with pretty pictures and tasty graphical tricks. CDTV should bring out the best in the game.



The original Amiga version of *Wrath Of The Demon* suffered from monumental disk access. The CDTV version should cure this problem, at least.

paid stupid amounts of money to manipulate the facts, and he does so admirably. The point is, if you're toying with the idea of buying CDTV, don't take a blind bit of notice of all this multimedia nonsense. Stick to the facts.

So, you pop off down to Dixons or wherever for a sneaky fiddle, and what do you find? Nothing very much at all if you're looking for a computer – what you'll be confronted by looks suspiciously video recorder-esque. It's matt black, it's got one of those little light displays, and it sports a front loading system. As with a video it comes with a remote control with which you, ahem, remotely control everything. The remote features a joypad not unlike those of the Megadrive or Nintendo. There's no keyboard (you can buy one as extra), so you can play exclusively though a point and click environment.

For the techies among you I should point out that we are being treated to one Megabyte of RAM as well as an extra 2Mb which simply helps the machine do its own thing. There's also 512K of ROM which hauls everything along (it contains Kickstart). Graphics and sound capabilities are exactly the same as with your Amiga 500 but there's also a tasty one Megabyte of video RAM. And that it, more or less. What's interesting is not what it can do, but how it'll be perceived... ■

WHY NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON...

Acronym nuts will be pleased to learn that CDTV apparently stands for Commodore Dynamic Total Vision. But most of us can happily bimble through life clutching two very simple abbreviations. They are CD and TV, and they are self-explanatory.

However, CDTV's grand title is the seed from which all manner of trouble has grown. When important people were first shown the CDTV they were utterly enraptured. That was two years ago, and still CDTV is not in the shops. In the meantime, everyone and their word processors have been busily attempting to quantify and explain. The result is that no-one knows what the hell is going on. Commodore confused the matter further by launching the dear thing every time more than half a dozen journalists assembled in the same place. One industry wit described it as 'the ship that faced a thousand launches.'

Hacks from everything from The Daily Telegraph to Toy Trader duly started scribbling about how 'hard it is to explain' before introducing our friend the businessman, who made a point of talking nonsense about mixed up multimedia generations, thus making the prediction nicely true.

Much of the confusion stems not from CDTV's undoubted capabilities as a games machine, but from its untested capabilities as an information database. Programs in the offing include *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, the *Illustrated Holy Bible*, and the *World Vista Atlas*, and with that sort of thing sitting alongside straight shoot-'em-ups it becomes easy to see where some of the confusion comes from. The problem isn't just that nobody knows what the machine can do, it's that nobody knows who it's meant to be aimed at.

But anyway, back to the information database stuff. Instead of flicking through paper versions of these fine works, you wander through pictorial databases soaking up information at will. If, for instance, you were interested in bonkers Shakespearian characters, you could easily call up all information on King Lear, Hamlet, Lady Macbeth and Titus Andronicus. It's not a game, but it can be more fun than wading through a Penguin edition of the Bard's doings. Other interesting little fancies include *All Dogs Go to Heaven* and *Electric Crayon*, which acts as a digital colouring book for youngsters.

But let's get back to games. You'll recognise many of the titles on offer simply because software houses are smart enough to try their best games on the new format. This means we won't be offered a heap of old rubbish (though the existence of *Psycho Killer* tends to refute this) but the best in entertainment software.

***Falcon, Future Wars, Xenon II, Pro Tennis, BAT, Lemmings, Battlestorm*. They're all here as well as some pretty odd offerings which, we're told, are being written with the intention of making the most of CDTV. Tiger Media's *Airwave Adventure – Case of the Cautious Condor* is an Agatha Christie- style detective romp featuring more than 1,000 scenes. It's kind of like watching a movie, except you call the shots. The CD-based FM Towns version has already been scooping awards in Japan.**

Movie style games are top of the agenda for forward thinking producers and it's no surprise that Lucasfilm have waded in with an extended version of the Battle of Britain cracker *Their Finest Hour*. Talented animation team Sullivan-Bluth of *Dragon's Lair* fame are also working on a science fiction extravaganza.

Programs cost anything from £30 for an Amiga conversion, to £50 for a really special game. When you consider that the hardware costs £600, it's hardly a purchase to be taken lightly.

For current Amiga owners (and I'm guessing there are quite a few of you reading this) there is the option of a £299 CD drive which, it is being claimed, will turn your machine into a CDTV (though, of course, it won't pack it away in the snug black box).

Optimistically, Commodore expects 80 per cent of Amiga owners to come up with cash. We're not so sure. There's no doubt that your pals will be impressed if you tool up with some CDTV kit, but your bank manager might not be so overwhelmed...

WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

CDTV's fate is always to be the first CD based home computer. In years to come, only sad misfits will claim that it was a work of technical genius. Commodore and CDTV have some extremely powerful enemies. Chief amongst these is Philips and its Compact Disc Interactive (CD-I) system. Philips (who invented the home video recorder and audio Compact Disc) will be unleashing their little monster in about a year's time. It will be at least £200 more expensive than CDTV, but, from what we've seen, will be much better. Little extras are being prepared for CD-I including Full Motion Video (whole interactive movies on one CD). We won't harp on about CD–I, but let's just suggest that if these systems were countries, CD-I would be Japan, and CDTV would just about get away with being Ireland. A world apart...

WHAT THEY SAID...

We can't help feeling that it will take more than words to prove that CDTV is really something special. But it's worth checking out what the people who have most to win or lose have to say...

'We're going to tell the people why they need CDTV. We have to give them a reason for wanting it. People need something new. Television is in the doldrums, camcorders are yesterday's thing. CDTV adds a new dimension to games playing. It's out of this world.'

Steve Franklin
Commodore UK Managing Director

'It is essential that it is seen as something wholly new, different and exciting. If not it will only ever appeal to the boundaries of the home computer market.'

Dawn Levack
Commodore UK Marketing Manager

'Commodore are calling CDTV an interactive machine, but you can't really interact with it at the moment. The CDs are only good to read, you can't write to them.'

Nigel Hayden
Technical Adviser to the Independent Commodore Products User Group

'We're looking at CD-I but none of the machines are ready yet. So, for us, CDTV is an excellent machine to cut our teeth on.'

Eric Matthews of The Bitmap Brothers

'If people buy now they will be locked with Amiga technology. When CD-I arrives it will have Full Motion Video with TV quality. It depends if they are prepared to wait.'

Julie Philips
Philips Interactive Media

'It could quadruple our profits.'

Kelly Sumner
Commodore National Sales Manager

'CDTV will truly change the way people learn and are entertained. It's the real new media of the nineties'.

Nolan Bushnell
CDTV Project Manager

'Some of the early software titles won't really make the most of the hardware. We'll have to give it a year before we really see what it can do.'

David '*Lemmings*' Jones
DMA Design

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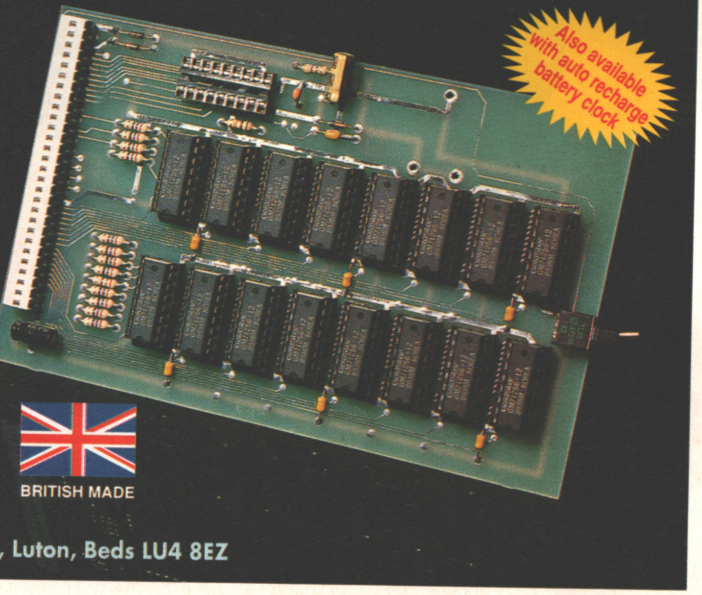

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‘If I were not in this industry…

A golfer, me. But not professionally – you can’t drink. I enjoy playing. My handicap’s the worst – about 26 or something like that, but I haven’t played for two years. I’m starting again this month.’

Michael Montgomery
Bitmap Brother

‘A comic-book artist, me. For 2000AD type comics. I’ve always wanted to be one ever since I wanted to grow up. I suppose in some ways computer games are comics on screen.’

Dan Malone
Artist & Designer, The Bitmap Brothers

‘A test pilot, me. For very dangerous aircraft. It’d be more exciting than coding. But the craft’s got to have less than a fifty per cent chance of coming back for me to do it. By the law of averages I’d only survive two flights. Then again, there’s no reason why I couldn’t go on forever.’

Christopher Yates
Programmer, Sensible Software

‘In the TV or film industry, me. I’d still like to be involved in creativity, coming up with program concepts or as a film director. You have such a control over a film, and you can do so much to influence people’.

Mev Dinc
Joint MD, Vivid Image Developments

‘An architect, me. That’s what I was heading for when I was at college but I never got there. I enjoyed it.’

Tony Crowther
Author *Captive*

‘A solicitor, me. I was influenced at an early age by TV shows like Petracelli.’

Jason Perkins
Strangeways

‘A comic-book artist, me. I’m crap at drawing but I’d like to be good and that’s where I’d like to do it.’

Chris Long
Programmer *Chuck Rock*

‘A writer, me. I’d like to write musicals or plays because I like the theatre and I like playing music and I like writing things. My dad did amateur dramatics for about 20 years so I was brought up with it. It’s not so much the performing but the directing and so on I’d like. But it’d probably fail and I’d end up hungry.’

Jonathan Hare
Joint Emperor, Sensible Software

‘I’d like to write screenplays for the movies, me. Which I’m doing now. My first screenplay is being looked at by a producer, and I’ve just completed my second. I’m also making short 16 millimetre films now, which means I’m trying to do three things at once. The story for *Prince Of Persia II* I’m working out now. It will involve the same character. He won the princess’ hand at the end of the first adventure and marries her. Something new and terrible happens, but I’m still working out the details.’

Jordan Mechner
Author *Prince Of Persia*

‘A session guitarist, me. Simply because it’s the other love in my life.’

Ross Goodley
Author *Gravity, Drop Soldier*

'A rally driver, me. It'd be exciting. I like driving and you can do all sorts of wild things in a rally car – especially if someone's sponsoring it. You wouldn't have to worry too much about smashing it up.'

Peter Irvin
Co-author *Exile*

'Something in electronics, me. It's how I got into computers. I'd like to design digital electronics – nothing analogue. A ground-breaking computer perhaps ...'

Martin Day
The Assembly Line

'A pop star, me. Just so I could write a song for Paula Abdul.'

Nik Pelling
Author *3D Pool, Loopz*
Programmer

'An astronomer, me. It's a very interesting subject, something which stimulates the imagination. It's fundamentally a boring science but there are some interesting aspects, such as the formation of solar systems, and how long the Earth is likely to be where it is, and how long before we get hit by the next major meteorite.'

David Braben
Author *Elite, Elite II*

'Filling Steven Speilberg's role, me. I'd get a kick out of creating an escapist scenario, such as an Indiana Jones plot, filming it, and then knowing that millions of people would be piling into cinemas to enjoy it. It seems to me, as a creator of games, that the challenge of organising large scale special effects is remarkably similar to the process involved in producing the special effects in the microworld of games computers.'

Archer Maclean
Author *IK+, 147 3D Snooker*

...something else I'd like to be, if I were not in this industry, a window cleaner, me!' Now there's a thought. Gary Penn (being the only one in the office to remember this obscure Monty Python song) put this question to a selection of veteran coders. Here's what they had to say...

'A pilot, me. Of a fast jet fighter. You probably don't get paid very well, but at least it'd be exciting. Actually, a World War Two fighter pilot perhaps would be better for the dogfighting.'

Michael Powell
Author *Powerdrome*

'A rock star, me. It's a hobby that I don't do very well at the moment, but if I put more time into it, I might get good at it. Life's too short to do a job that you don't enjoy doing. Yes, I'm in a band, but we haven't got a name for it. It started about ten years ago and it's only just reformed. I play bass. I would have been a bank manager or an airline pilot, but there were too many exams for the former and I'm colour blind so that ruled out the latter.'

Andrew Braybrook
Author *Paradroid 90*
Programmer *Rainbow Islands*

'Retired, me. Because it's easier than working, isn't it? I feel like a life of leisure, with no deadlines and never having to finish anything. Actually I could become a Belgian chocolate taster. You ever tried Belgian chocolate? Mmmmm...'

Paul Shirley
Author *Quartz, Spindizzy Worlds*

'A lorry driver, me. I don't know why. It could be the lure of the freedom of the roads. Or that I like running over hedgehogs. It's obviously something to do with my childhood.'

John Twiddy
Vivid Image Developments

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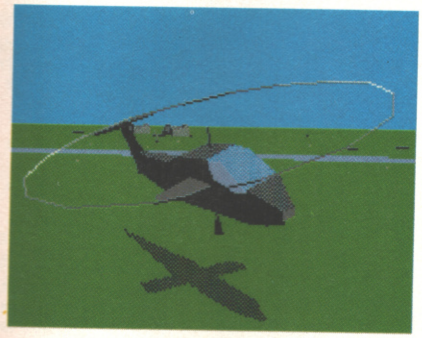
'We're sick to the death of boring flight sims!'

Jeremy Smith, Managing Director of Core Design. 'We don't really have any team leaders or project managers in the programming department. I suppose I oversee all that kind of thing in as much as it needs doing, but to a large extent it runs itself. At the start of a project we get everyone together and talk it through, everyone making their own contribution, but we're all so close to all the games here that suggestions and decisions are being made all the time'.

Photography by Stuart Whale

And aren't we all? Core Design's upcoming *AH-73M Thunderhawk* – a decidedly user-friendly and shoot-'em-uppy helicopter sim – looks like it'll go some way to setting the balance right, but it's just one of a number of interesting projects lined up for release during 1991. '*Thunderhawk*'s just the beginning, though,' says Managing Director Jeremy Smith, 'this is the year that's really going to put us on the map!' Matt Bielby nods and looks suitably impressed. After all, he says it with such conviction and self belief that you actually start to believe him!



Core's Jeremy Smith is big (some – including most of his employees – would say rather too big!), cheery, and incredibly enthusiastic about his company. And well he should be. After all, not only have Core been responsible for more than their fair share of great Amiga games – *Rick Dangerous 1 & 2, Car-Vup, Corporation and Chuck Rock* spring to mind – they seem to have done it with the minimum of sweat and tears too. And (and it's quite a big 'and') when they took the fairly major step of going it alone and publishing their own games last year they seemed to achieve it with barely a hitch. There's something – luck? Good management? – on their side, that's for sure.

The last time I visited Core was for Your Sinclair – they were just finishing off their last product for MicroProse (*Rick Dangerous 2*) and the place was buzzing with the idea that they were about to start publishing for themselves. 'Ah, well,' I thought, 'they're not planning to do any 8-bit stuff, so I won't be coming back here for a while.'

How wrong can you be? In the year or so since then AMIGA POWER's happened (so I'm suddenly interested in 16-bit once again), *Corporation*'s made it big and the risk Core took in doing everything themselves looks like it was a very wise one indeed. For successful developers to publish their own products suddenly looks like it could be surprisingly easy.

'One reason it's gone so smoothly is because of the people we've got,' says Managing Director Jeremy Smith. 'Kevin Norburn, the Financial Director, and myself have been in the industry for longer than we care to remember, and have already made just about all the mistakes it's possible to make – while we were being employed by other people! At Core there are just the three of us – the other being Marketing Manager Richard Barclay – running the management side of the company, and that seems to be all we need. Everyone else is a programmer or graphic artist.'

From left to right, Richard Barclay, Jeremy Smith, Kevin Norburn. As Marketing Manager, Managing-cum-Creative Director and Financial Director, these three run the business side of Core Design. 'We run it sensibly as a business. The main thing is to make sure that nothing goes late and that we come out with the right products at the right times'.

You certainly don't seem to have suffered very much from the old problem of slippage. None of your products have run hopelessly late.

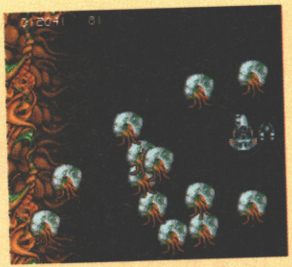
'No, we never seem to have slippage. If a product is meant to be released on a certain date, that's when it'll come out. I guess it's all to do with everyone being very close to all the projects, so we can set ourselves realistic schedules, see how things are going and make adjustments early. We structure things so that we can produce fairly easy-to-program but hopefully high selling games – things like *Warzone*, say – which will keep us going while we spend time on the bigger projects. There's no real gap between management and programmers – we're all working to the same ends, and in the same offices too.'

So it's realistic scheduling then that makes it all so easy?

'Well, yes, but I suppose good management skills in general too'. Richard Barclay backs this up.

'I suppose I've been spoiled, but since I've been at Core everything's happened exactly when it was meant to with very little hassle to speak of. It's getting so I can't really see any excuse for the problems other publishers have at all – with both *Chuck Rock* and *Warzone* we set the release dates six months ago, and both products came out →

ROB TOONE
Programmer



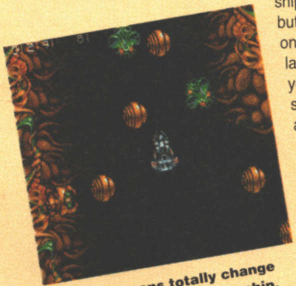
Bright colours, clean backgrounds and *lots* of aliens – that's *Frenetic*.

FRENETIC

work IN PROGRESS

***Frenetic* is an eight level vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up – hardly something to get wildly excited about, you might think. And yet one look at it and you start to realise that it's actually rather good. Perhaps very good. It's certainly colourful – more like a console game than anything – and, indeed, as we talk about it the conversation keeps coming back to classic Megadrive and PC Engine titles. 'After all, they have the best end of level nasties,' says programmer Rob Toone, 'and they happen to be my favourite bit of any game'.**

So, Rob, how's *Frenetic* different to other shoot-'em-ups?
Well, in some ways you could say that it isn't, not really, except that I've tried to take all my favourite bits from arcade and console games I've enjoyed and mix them all together in a pleasing way. I like games where there's lots of bullet dodging and the landscape doesn't keep getting in the way all the time. I want to make you sweat a bit, but I don't want to make it unfair – I've tested the game with basic fire-power, and know that it's possible to complete it without you having to collect every weapon you see. Too many games put you in what I call a 'no-win situation' – they make it impossible to progress beyond a certain point if you haven't picked up the right weapons earlier in the game, which is an annoying and unfriendly way to do it.



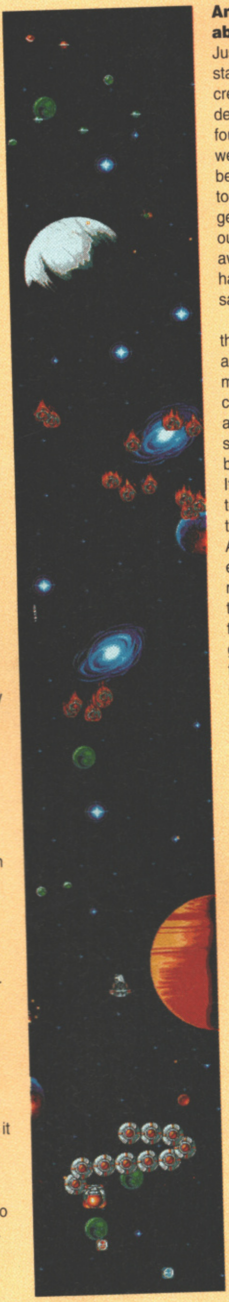
Add-on weapons totally change the size and shape of your ship.

Playing it, it looks like you've got the collision detection a little off.
That's deliberate. If you look at it closely, you'll see that bullets that just clip the wings or the nose of your ship don't destroy it outright at all. I want to be generous with things like collision detection, and hopefully create the feeling that you're just slipping through the bullets, that they're maybe burning the outside of your ship and knocking bits of it, but you're still more or less in one piece. Banging into the landscape doesn't destroy you either – you just sort of slide along it – I want the aliens to be the things you really have to worry about. The only time the landscape will kill you is if you get trapped by some sort of rock formation and it forces you off the bottom of the screen – though that doesn't happen very often. At one point we were thinking of having it so bits of your ship and perhaps some of the weapons you've collected and so on fall off when you catch a glancing blow from a bullet, but thinking about it we decided that it'd be better using memory to make the aliens look and act impressively than do too much with the space ship, really.

I'm still not really sure why it is, though, that you've done a shoot-'em-up. Surely there are far too many of them about as it is?
One thing Core seem to be quite good at is taking an established game type and souping it up a bit – it's what we did with the *Rick Dangerous* games, and it's what we did with *Warzone*. There's no real reason behind us doing a shoot-'em-up like this one except that that we've not done one before and I think that it's actually one of the most diverse sorts of game around. People say they're all the same, but they're not if you're a fan, and I just happen to like to kill big things. It's the little details I enjoy as much as anything – the fact that someone's thought about how to make the power-ups work in a pleasing way, the fact that they've gone to the trouble of colour coding everything so the game has a feeling of completeness, and the fact that the learning curve is timed just right. Too many shoot-'em-ups look superficially good, but play appallingly.

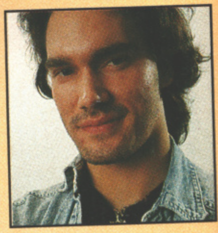
There haven't been all that many great shoot-'em-ups on the Amiga, really, have there? Tell me some you enjoy.
Well, I like *Hybris*, even though it's a bit easy, and *Battle Squadron*, but that's even easier. They both had good end of level aliens too, though they all acted in exactly the same way as each other – our nasties are all totally different. *SWIV* looks good too, but I've not got round to playing it yet. And that's about it really.

What about *Xenon 2*?
I knew you'd say that! I found it unplayable. It kept restricting your movement and then sending waves of aliens right down the path you're forced to take, something I can't stand. The shooting was pretty unreliable too. I prefer the original *Xenon* to be honest.



Anything else to be said about the game?
Just a few quick points. For a start, we've not included a credit system. That's deliberate, because we've found that, using credits, we're completing even the best console shoot-'em-ups too easily and so not really getting full value for money out of them. Take credits away and you make progress harder, but, I think, more satisfying.

I also vary the speed of the background scrolling quite a lot. Even without adding any more aliens to the screen, you can up the excitement level by a notch or two quite easily by simply making the background whizz by faster. It's all part of adding emotion to the game – speeding up the music can add to this too. At one point we have everything – background, music, the lot – speed up towards the end of a level, then slow right down to a halt, go quiet, and then we take all the smaller aliens off the screen. You know that something exciting's going to happen then and are waiting for it, so when the big end of level baddie appears it's a really impressive moment. It's an idea that came, yet again, from a console game, and is the sort of thing which will hopefully make *Frenetic* really memorable.



Jason Gee, ex-animator and front end sequences.

***Frenetic* will be released in July.**

when we said they would to the day. And that was without anyone having to work around the clock too.'

Surely with products like *Chuck Rock* it's fairly easy to set a reasonable schedule – it's when games get more experimental or unusual in nature that you start to get problems.

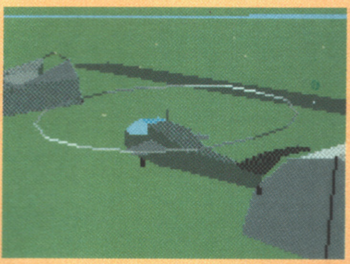
'Well, that's true,' says Jeremy, 'but we are generally pretty good at estimating how long something's going to take – we have projects working to a year long schedule, projects set at six months and so on. It's all to do with knowing exactly what it is you're setting out to do in the first place. 'Something like *Corporation* might take longer than a *Warzone*, but the potential rewards are higher. We've been very lucky with that product, in fact – the Amiga version of *Corporation* alone has done so well that the ST one didn't really prove to be necessary for our financial health at all. It's done so well it's allowed us to give more time to our other projects and put their release dates back a bit. *Thunderhawk*'s benefitted from that, and so has *Frenetic* – we've had time to get a rather nice front end sequence run up for that by ex-animator Jason Gee, for instance.'

Jason's an interesting addition to your team, isn't he? Didn't he win an animation competition or something?

'Yes he did. We've got him scheduled to start work on a new project after he's finished the stuff for *Frenetic*, which should be rather special. In fact, we've been getting quite a few interesting new people joining up recently. It's nice that we don't seem to ever have to poach people or go looking for them – they just ring us up. Recently Jerr O'Carroll and Ged Keareney started, and the game they're working on is really stunning. Jerr used to be an animator at Sullivan-Bluth – you know, the people in Ireland who recently did the full-length cartoon 'All Dogs Go To Heaven' – and they're working on what'll be our major Christmas release, *Heimdall*. I'm convinced that it'll be the biggest thing we've ever done'.

Ah, yes, *Heimdall*. This really does look like it'll be quite a remarkable product. The style is very

MACINTOSH AVERY
Programmer



'We've tried to make sure all the roads, rivers and so on curve naturally.' Mac Avery, programmer.

AH-73M THUNDERHAWK

work IN PROGRESS

This one's been through a number of incarnations to get to where it is today. First it was a 3D engine, developed by Mac Avery in his spare time over a number of years, then a 3D shoot-'em-up with little regard for the complexities of flight sims, and now, in its final form, it's either an arcade-like flight sim or a super-complicated shoot-'em-up. One thing that's not changed is that it's about helicopters.

So, Mac, what's it like going head to head with *Gunship 2000*?
We don't think we are. We like *Gunship*, and look forward to this new version, but they're trying to do something totally different. Ours is much more of an action game. The only real similarity is that they both have helicopters in them!

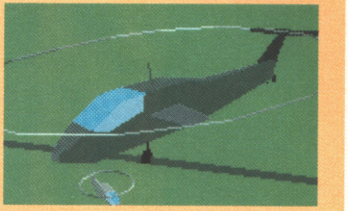
And both are set in the near future?
Well, yes. As far as we're concerned, we've done that to make it more arcade like, basically. If we pretend it's in the future we can say that the weapons are smaller and so more will fit onto each chopper. Now there's no danger of you running out of missiles in the middle of a dogfight or whatever. It also means that we can play a bit fast and loose with the abilities of each aircraft too. They're all based on existing American and Russian craft – you're flying what's basically an Apache gunship, and the baddies have updated versions of current Hind, Hokum (the Apache equivalent), MiG-29 and Su-25 (the A-10 Tankbuster look-alike) models.

The finished thing is quite a bit more arcadey than, say, *F-29*, which is one of the more shoot-'em-uppy flight sims – we've got rid of all that tedious flying-over-long-distances-to-get-to-your-target stuff. An animated sequence does that work for us instead. Once you're in the air you get straight into the action.

How do the missions work?
We've divided everything into theatres of operation – Europe, the Middle East, Alaska, Central America and so on – and each one is built of up a number of missions that you have to take in a set order, so that they build up to tell a complete story. In the European scenario, for instance, you have to help a Russian scientist who's trying to defect by road, by shooting down anything that threatens him, and then bombing all over the map to destroy separate ground targets as diversions and so on. Most missions – there are 60 in all – are against ground targets protected by SAM installations, but things get harder when you come up against enemy helicopters. The Hokum models are particularly tough – they may carry less weapons, but they're faster and more manoeuvrable than your craft. The longest missions should take six to 10 minutes, so there's little chance you'll get bored. In this respect we've taken our cue from *Wing Commander*, which got the mission lengths more or less right.

Certainly, the way you've presented things is very reminiscent of that.
Yes, that was our bench mark – in *Wing Commander* and similar games, the intro and between mission sequences are like a film. We've got a character called Jack who's your boss and gives you your briefings, tells you how you're doing and so on. Partially all this is for the American market where they've got the patience to sit through it all, but since we've been able to combine the briefing room scenes with digitised pics and 3D sequences, some English people may enjoy it too!

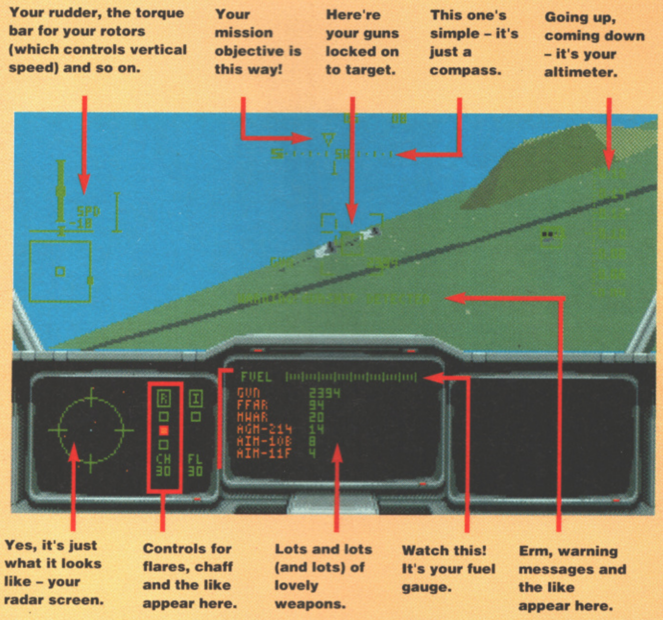
How worried are you about speed? That seems to be the first thing everyone asks about flight sims.
Well, it's really how smooth it runs that counts, not how fast it goes. Anyone, just about, can come up with a fast 3D system – it's how good the game actually feels in play that matters. Things that help with that include the care we've taken not to fall into the horizon/pyramid/dot trap which hampers the look of many 3D games. We've taken the effort to make sure all the roads, rivers and so on curve naturally, rather than be made up out of straight lines, which helps the feel a lot. We also have daytime, night, dusk and dawn effects which we use – in something like the European scenario, where there's a very fast turnaround between missions, it helps with the illusion of reality by making it look like everything's happening in the one day.



One of a series of nifty external views – notice the enemy chopper at the bottom.

With a game like this, which sets out to be fun rather than spotlessly accurate, I guess having an intuitive player interface is all important.
Everything's mouse controlled – apart from for external views and radar jammers, you don't have to touch the keyboard at all. The idea is, as you say, to make everything as easy to use as possible. One brief glance and the manual, and you'll be off. The whole idea behind this project is to take the hard work, pain and boredom factor out of flight sims, and make them appeal to everybody, really.

***AH-73M Thunderhawk* will be released at the end of August.**


Your rudder, the torque bar for your rotors (which controls vertical speed) and so on.
Your mission objective is this way!
Here're your guns locked on to target.
This one's simple – it's just a compass.
Going up, coming down – it's your altimeter.
SPD
FUEL
GUN 2394
FFAR 94
MWAR 20
AGM-214 14
AIM-10B 8
AIM-11F 4
R
I
CH 30
FL 30
Yes, it's just what it looks like – your radar screen.
Controls for flares, chaff and the like appear here.
Lots and lots (and lots) of lovely weapons.
Watch this! It's your fuel gauge.
Erm, warning messages and the like appear here.

similar to those Sullivan-Bluth games, *Space Ace*, *Dragon's Lair* and so on, yet this is much more of, well, a proper game.

'Yes, it's all based on ancient Norse myths, you see, and the look is all very "Viking". The storyboards, and the work they've done so far, are amongst the most gorgeous I've ever seen.'

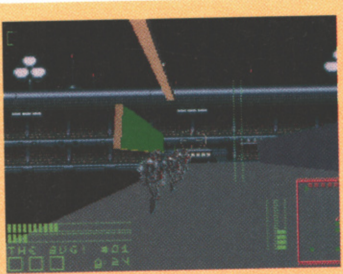
Heimdall was the sort of look-out of the Norse gods, wasn't he? He'd stand on the Rainbow Bridge that joined Earth to Asgard, home of the Gods, and sound the warning if anyone attacked. Which is all very well – it's nice to have a vocation and everything – but all that standing around and waiting is hardly the sort of thing that intriguing gameplay is made of, is it?

'No, I guess it isn't. That's why what we're telling the story of the young Heimdall, before he took up the guardianship of Asgard. Our Heimdall is half God, half-human, and has to prove himself worthy of acceptance into their ranks. His task is to sail across around in a longship, visiting various islands and collecting and returning missing items to Asgard. At one point he's got to collect Thor's hammer and return it to him.'

The main game screens look a bit like 'Sullivan-Bluth does *Cadaver*.'

'Well, the basic gameplay is of the 3D isometric puzzle sort – not unlike *Cadaver* or lots of old 8-bit games, I suppose you could say – and, of course, it's packed with these lovely cartoon-like graphics. We also have some shorter arcade-like sequences where we can really go to town visually – a scene where Heimdall has to catch a greased pig that's constantly running away from him, for instance, or an axe-throwing contest which works a bit like a game of computer darts. This takes place in a pub, and Heimdall's drunk, so his aim keeps wobbling about all over the place. His target is to actually sever the strapped down plaits of a young girl, so if he misses and hits her head there'll be a nasty mess! In fact, at the moment we actually have a rather horrible, blood-thirsty sequence which comes up if the axe actually strikes her face, but that's been done as a bit of a joke and I'm sure it'll come out for the final version.' →

SIMON PHIPPS
Graphic artist



The Green team line up defensively in front of the large floating slab that forms their goal.

RETRO

work IN PROGRESS

A high-tech, metallic-looking future sport game, this one positively begs comparisons with the Bitmap's Speedball/Speedball 2. *In actual fact though, the look may be similar but the game's anything but – the most immediate and important difference being that it features a first person perspective, as if you are actually one of the players flying about the multi-level 3D pitch. It's a brave way to do it, but something that's notoriously difficult to pull off (see last month's review of the similarly-designed Italian game* I Play 3D Soccer *for evidence) as graphic artist and game's co-creator Simon Phipps admits.*

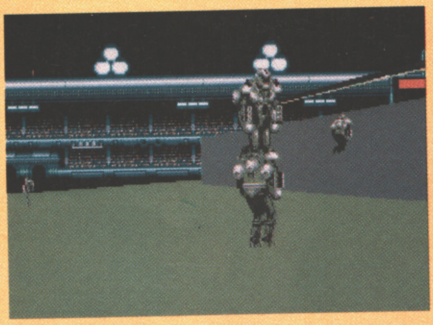
Where did the idea for this one come from then, Simon?
It came from the programmer, Steve Northcott – he's the bloke who wrote *Driller* – who came along with the 3D system and whole future sport idea. Unusually for us, this is one where the programmer works totally from home.

I guess you could say the game itself is a sort of hybrid of soccer, American football and high-tech weaponry. The players themselves wear body armour and jet packs – supposedly based on futuristic space mining gear – and are armed with various weapons systems. Each team is made up of six people, and the idea is, would you believe, to get the ball and put it into the opposition goal. We'll have it so you can switch between team members while in play, I think, though to be honest, the mechanics of how the game will actually play haven't been worked out yet.

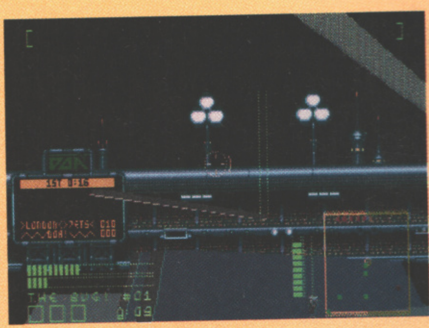
In terms of the actual look of the game it seems to be more or less finished.
Well, yes – I've gone just about as far as I can go for the moment. I think the players need to be modified a bit still – it's not too clear which team they're on from a distance – but I've got lots of the nicer details, like the crowd walking in and filling the stands at the start of a match, then performing a Mexican wave during play, sorted out already. Like I said, it's the gameplay that's still rather up in the air.

And that's exactly what'll make or break the game, really.
Yes, indeed. We know a lot of the detail stuff already, like that all the players will have individual characteristics, for instance – some will pass better than others, some will be more likely to start fighting with opponents rather than concentrate on the game and so on. We'll have it so you can play the game in two ways – either by paying attention to your players and their abilities and all the management side, or just by picking it up and getting on with it. It'll be up to you. There will be bonus targets throughout the play area, as well as the huge slabs that count as the main goals, and the pitch will have various levels, and floating platforms and the like to complicate things further. What we don't know is how it'll all come together in play. Rest assured, though, we're not going to release it until it's really top notch stuff. It won't be a case of 'nice graphics, where's the game?'

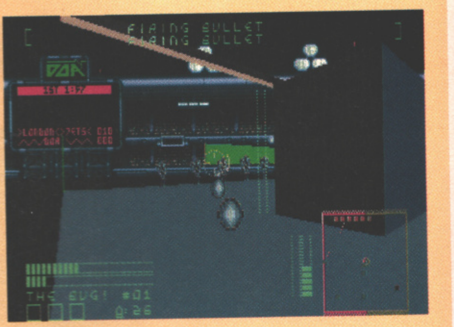
***Retro* will be released in September.**



Hey! He's standing on that bloke's shoulders! Actually, nobody's engaging in Harlem Globetrotters tactics, it's a visual trick created by the heavy use of jet-packs.



Impressive, and gigantic, stadium fills up neatly with crowds before every game. Apparently they do a Mexican Wave during play!



Bullets travelling scross the screen towards your target, *Battlezone*-style. We only hope the possibility of confusion during play doesn't scupper the game.

What's reaction been like so far?

'Generally, people who've seen anything of the game have been stunned. Reaction in America was incredible – like I said, if this doesn't turn out to be the biggest product Core have ever done, something will have gone terribly wrong.'

How do you feel *Thunderhawk* will do going up against, say, MicroProse's *Gunship 2000* later on this year – let alone all the other flight sims that are out there or due for release soon? Is it daunting?

'Not really. We like *Gunship*, and are looking forward to *2000*, but really ours is a very different game. As I'm sure Mac and the others involved with it will tell you (and they did – see the box on *Thunderhawk*) our game started out life as a sophisticated shoot-'em-up, and still has those leanings. It may appeal to a different sort of gameplayer, or it may appeal to the same gameplayers for different reasons, but the fact remains that, despite surface similarities, the two games are not setting out to do the same thing at all. They're complimentary if anything, not rivals. And anyway, *Gunship 2000* on the Amiga probably won't be available until the end of the year at least, so there's not really a problem at all.'

Games designer Bob Churchill has proved himself an essential part of the creative process at Core.

That's good, because you've had some funny timings lately, haven't you? First *Chuck Rock* comes out at about the same time as Ocean's *Toki* (see review this issue), a similar caveman-style game – not to mention Titus' *Prehistorik* (also this issue) – and then *Warzone* goes head to head with *Mercs*. Rather odd, wouldn't you say?

'I know! It's weird, isn't it? There hadn't been any *Ikari Warriors* style games for ages, and then two quite well received ones come along at once! Normally we don't particularly like to go up against licensed products and the like – we didn't release anything last Christmas, as you may have noticed, for fear that it would get lost in the rush of big name titles – but I think that's starting to change. We're confident enough with *Heimdall* to let it go up against the really big names, for instance.'

It's getting near to going home time by this point, so I make this question my last. What does the future hold for Core, then? Do you see yourselves slowly developing into a traditional medium size – or even large – software house, or do you see things continuing pretty much as they are at the moment? Or what?

'As for getting bigger, no, there're are no plans for that, not really. We don't want to be another Domark or whatever – we want to concentrate on original, high quality 16-bit and (increasingly) console product, with a ceiling somewhere around the 10 new projects a year mark. 17 people work here at the moment, and I don't really want to see things rising above about, say 20 – with the sort of numbers we have here at the moment it's possible to keep track of and have everyone involved in every project. Everyone can – and does! – make comment and have an influence on everything we do, and that helps keep the quality high.

'But don't take my word for it – wait and see. I think you'll be suitably impressed by what we do this year.'

And once again he smiles and looks so utterly confident that you can't help but believe him. ■

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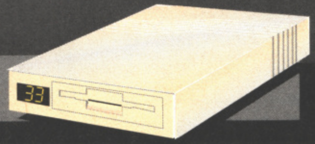

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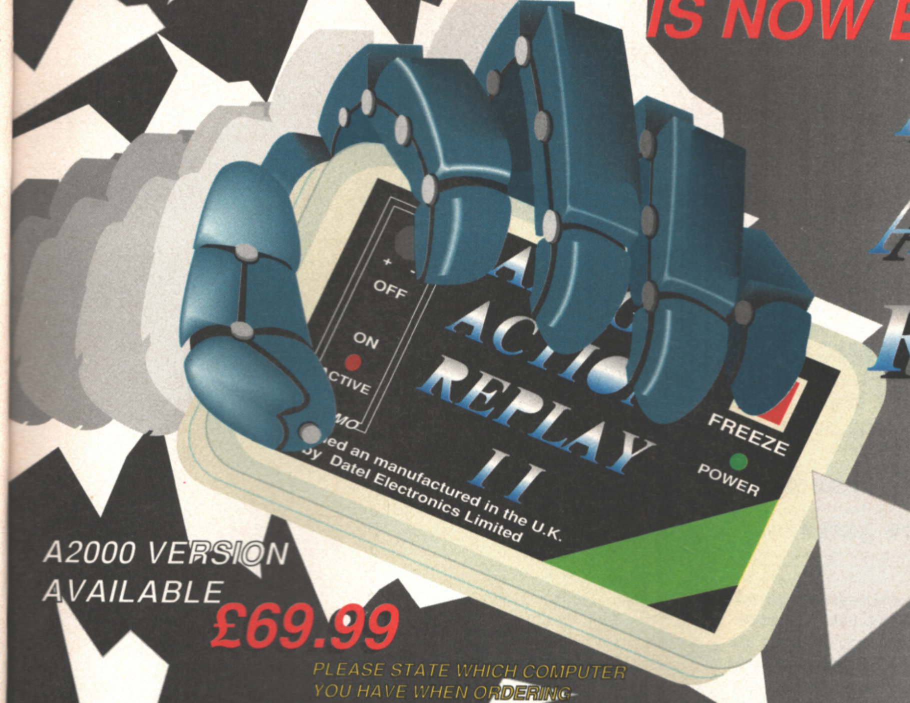

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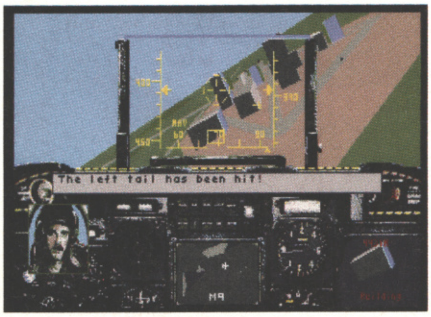
GAME REVIEWS

CONTINUED

Welcome to the second part of the AMIGA POWER reviews section. On page 80 we start our budget coverage, and page 85 features our first PD reviews, but first here are the rest of this month's full price games...

A-10 TANK KILLER


The left tail has been hit!

Time to look for the eject – this is one *A-10 Tank Killer* which won't be coming back.

Publisher: Dynamix/Sierra
Author: Joseph Wingard, Damon Slye (Design)
Price: £35.76
Release: Out now

'Mummy, will I be a MicroProse flight sim when I grow up?' 'No, son, I'm afraid you'll only ever be an *A-10 Tank Killer* game'. Unfortunately for Dynamix, we only got around to reviewing this latest flight simulator thang after playing *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, and it's certainly suffered quite a lot in the comparision.

It might sound harsh, but not only does this fail to push the boundaries of flight sims forwards any, it actually knocks them back a bit. Let me explain. That time and effort has been put into it is all too evident, but they've made the classic flight sim mistake. Yes, once again they only seem to have realised far too late in the day that the amount of depth they've tried to cram into it is totally ruining the gameplay. I know I seem to be eternally banging on about flight simulators being too slow, but having played games such as *F/A-18*, *F-29*, *F-19* and *F-15II* I've been treated to sims which are technically accurate (as accurate as I need, anyway), fast and fun to play. It's a shame that the same can't be said of this one, because the presentation is immaculate, and the missions can be great fun. Knocking out various bridges, convoys and of course tanks is an excellent way to relieve aggression.

A-10's trump card, though, is the fact that (maybe even more effectively than *F-15 Strike Eagle II*) it manages to create the impression of a real world. Messages are constantly coming through on the radio, informing you of countless movements within the warzone, and you even get a co-pilot giving you 'help'. The whole thing feels alive with action and movement.

Of course, no modern flight sim would be complete without lots of external camera views and the like, and A-10 has enough of them to keep graphics freaks happy. If only they'd put a turbo on the 3D graphics routines (which apparently is what the PC version feels like), I'd be giving it a mark somewhere in the eighties. But they didn't. So I won't. • *MARK RAMSHAW*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Yet another addition to the ever expanding flight sim stable. Unfortunately, the plethora of available sims means that a new one has to be top notch to stand out. This doesn't quite make it. And it's one meg only.

68 PERCENT

LOGICAL

Publisher: Rainbow Arts
Authors: Volker Eloesser, Ilyakan Akbiyik (Graphics), Rudolf Stember (Sound)
Price: £19.99
Release: Out now

Ten things the world needs now: peace in the Gulf; flood relief in Bangladesh; sensible political co-operation in Northern Ireland; free strawberry milk shakes on the National Health; another abstract puzzle game on the Amiga;

➔

It's the wargame to end all wargames – but is

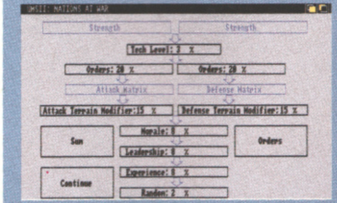
UNIVERSAL SIMULATOR

Publisher: Rainbird (MicroProse)
Price: £34.99
Authors: Intergalactic Development Incorporated
Release: Out now

Looking at the games that come into AMIGA POWER, every batch of new releases seems to contain another new wargame. However, the only real difference between most of them is the scenario – and the starting conditions. Surely if someone somewhere made a game where all the relevant variables were changeable, and there was the ability to add on scenario disks and create your own conflicts, they'd have the game to end all wargames. Which is exactly what Rainbird have tried to do with *UMS II – Nations At War.*

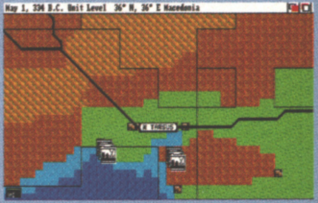
It's ambitious alright, but how well does it work? Well, it's certainly the most comprehensive and complex battle simulator around on any computer, and spread over four disks, it's a biggie. In fact the game is only on a single disk, with each of the three scenarios on one each: Alexander the Great; Napolean and Operation Overlord, better known as the D-Day landings.

UMS II is unbelievably complex and here lies its claim to being as much a battle simulator as a wargame. In addition to the usual modifiers of Experience, Leadership qualities and Morale, the player can also set numerous other options that all have their own subtle effects on the situation. Take attrition for example. Altering the attrition rates for troops (the rate at which they are worn down by the pressures of battle) alters their morale and leadership levels, which in turn has a further effect on their attrition rate. Even experienced wargamers will find the options offered by *UMS II* bewildering.

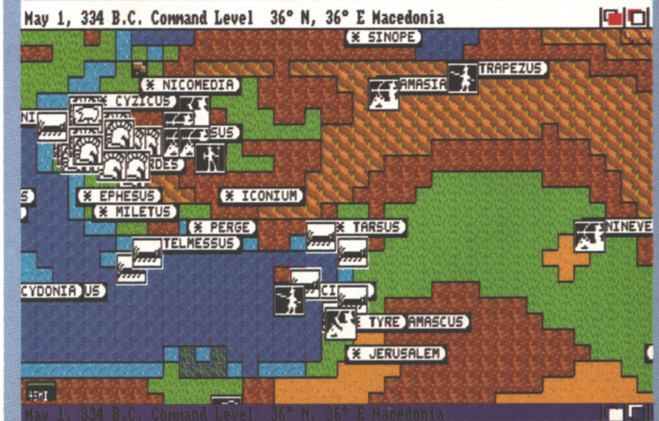

UMSII: NATIONS AT WAR

Strength | Strength
Tech Level: 3 %
Orders: 20 % | Orders: 20 %
Attack Matrix | Defense Matrix
Attack Terrain Modifier: 15 % | Defense Terrain Modifier: 15 %
Morale: 8 %
Leadership: 8 %
Experience: 8 %
Random: 2 %

Getting into the more techie side of *UMSII.* Pretty much every element of wargaming can be modified to create a wholly original scenario.


May 1, 334 B.C. Unit Level 36° N, 36° E Macedonia

Don't expect stunning graphics – this is a wargame, after all. By the way, this particular screen shows a conflict at Tarsus, Macedonia in the year 334BC.

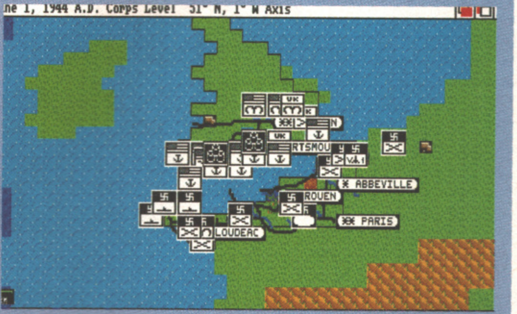

May 1, 334 B.C. Command Level 36° N, 36° E Macedonia

May 1, 334 B.C. Command Level 36° N, 36° E Macedonia

Getting a large-scale view of the action in Macedonia and related countries. Looks like there's some trouble brewing in the Middle East. (Some things never change).

is it friendly enough to win any new converts?

L MILITARY
R II



Recreating World War II (yet again) in *UMS II*. It's now June 1944, and (hurrah!) the Germans still haven't gained any British soil.

Troops don't just attack or defend – they can also screen, hold or assault. Air units can patrol, escort, bomb attack and intercept, while sea units evade, attack, avoid or launch off-shore salvos. And so it goes on.

Once you've mastered the rudiments of straightforward battle, you can take a step back from the world of moving units and armies to manipulate the political situations in the countries which you hold. You can set the tax rates, morale of the citizenry, speed and effectiveness of production and so on.

Sounds good so far? Well, with any game of this size you might expect a few flaws. *UMS II* is a little slow and the graphics range from the utilitarian to the downright ugly (I don't care if this is how wargames have been done before, there's no excuse for bad graphics anymore). But the game's fatal weakness is not the program at all, but the manual. If you think that a game of this complexity needs a detailed and exacting manual you'd be right. If you thought such a thing would be included with a game of this quality, sadly, you'd be wrong.

The manual provided is a chunky perfect-bound book, very smart, glossy and a good read. It contains an excellent reference guide to the commands and terms used and is solidly packed with tertiary information (even right down to the elective principal and ethos of early Macedonian society!). But despite this apparently comprehensive approach the essential third of the manual – an introductory tutorial section– is noticeable by its omission.

Picture the scene. You rip open the box, and insert the game disk into your Amiga. After the clever little animated title sequence, you're presented with a message telling you to back up, a menu bar and, erm, that's it. So, you choose a scenario (say Alexander's campaign), load the disk and suddenly there's a map of the Eastern Mediterranean and you're dropped into the middle of the biggest and bloodiest war the Ancient world had ever seen. There's no tutorial, no handy on-line help system, nothing. If you have a reasonable amount of experience of this kind of game, you are going to be soundly thrashed for the first few games until you get the hang of what's going on.

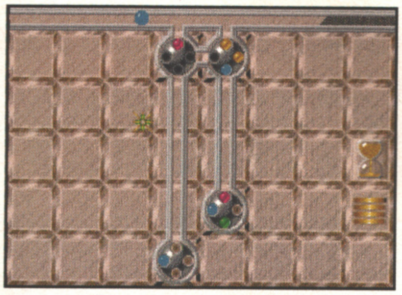
There are many specialist interest areas of Amiga games that are now making the cross-over into the mainstream. Flight sims are a prime example. *UMS II* is the most complete battle simulation of its kind and could have been the program to give wargames the same wider appeal. In the end, however, *UMS II* falls into the trap of most wargames, in that it appears to have been written for the exclusive club of gamers who are already obsessed by the subject. The novice player is thrown into a vast battlescape with very little aid from the ultimately interesting, but immediately useless, manual.

More scenarios and a Planet Editor are already planned for release and *UMS II* looks set to become the biggest thing since, well, since the original *UMS*. Some people will love it, but it will probably never reach the much greater audience it could have done because of its nasty knack of throwing the player headlong into full-scale wars – a problem only compounded by the impenetrable manual. This being the case, my overall opinion reflects the view of a seasoned wargamer • *PAUL LYONS*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Comprehensive and capable battle simulation game spoiled by horribly unfriendly player interface and tendency to throw you right in at the deep end. And it's one meg only.

76 PERCENT



Pretty graphics and easy-to-complete levels do not a great puzzle game make.

humanitarian aid for – hang on a minute, one of those doesn't sound quite right. Which could it be?

We've got *Klax*, we've got *Tetris*, we've got *Gem'X*, we've got *Puzznic*, we've got *Plotting* – is there simply room for one more abstract puzzle game? I guess that depends how good it is.

Most people would probably agree that the premier requirement for a good puzzle game is addictiveness. All the above games have it in buckets, but the bottom line is that it's missing from *Logical* and that's really the end of the story. The game has a solid puzzle-game construction (the idea is to shunt little marbles around to fill up all the wheels you can see on the screen with marbles of the same colour), but Rainbow Arts say that they expect even an average player to get about 20 levels into it on their first go. With a level taking upwards of five minutes to play through on average (and five minutes of pretty slow and repetitive actions at that), we're not looking at a high frustration or compulsion level, with the result that you're likely to play it once, think 'Oh well, that's quite nice', and dump it at the back of your software shelf never to see the light of day again.

It's a shame, because *Logical* is very attractively done and has loads of potential for mindbending, but even with level codes for easy access to the 'hard' levels, you're pretty unlikely to ever want to play it twice. (By the time you get to a challenging level, you'll have been playing for so long you'll be heartily sick of it all.) Some pointless extra features (the ridiculous 'one-colour' levels in particular) don't help matters any, either. Even at £5 below the norm, this is just too second-division to be worth considering. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Graphically lovely and intriguing game, spoiled by fundamental design flaws and excessive easiness. The quality of the opposition doesn't help either. Another 'could-have-been'.

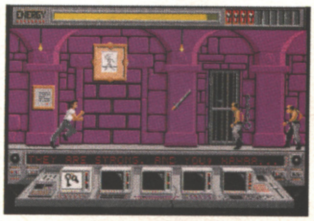
59 PERCENT

COUGAR FORCE

Publisher: Tomahawk
Price: £19.99
Author: Joseph Kluymans
Release: Out now

If I was to start this review by telling you this game was overpriced by at least £30, would you think I was being overly negative? If not, then just take my word for it and talk of it no more. If, however, you want some reasons, here are 10 to be going on with.

1) The animation is the worst I have ever seen on a full-price Amiga game. Yes, even worse than *Quest For Glory II*. Your hero (he certainly isn't mine) wibbles around as if he was on elastic, his head perpetually bobbing like a nodding dog in the back of a particularly shaky Lada.
2) Enemies appear at random, and disappear if you walk off the screen and then back on again.
3) The colour scheme is garish and sickly.
4) The action is appallingly slow.
5) Fighting with the baddies is laughably imprecise – it's a case of wiggle the joystick at random and hope for the best.
6) The game design is incredibly lazy.



By a cleverly mixing game styles, *Cougar Force* invents the 'crap-'em-up'.

Many of the dangers are random, and some of them (like the grenades thrown from unseen hands off-screen that home in on your position) are unavoidable. Invisible walls make an unwelcome appearance and the screen layout is illogical too – you can walk right for 30 screens, then walk left for one screen and be back where you started.
7) The instructions are useless. (I still haven't managed to work out how to fire the gun you find on Level One).
8) The screens flick rather than scroll, but unbelievably there's still a major pause every time you move from one to another. Was this game written in BASIC or what?
9) The on-screen text messages are badly-translated, unfunny, smug and generally abusive.
10) Section Two is almost totally unfathomable. (It's a sort of flight sim thing – the 3D is alright, but as a game it's downright useless).

Convinced yet? If you're not, I can only imagine that you're either the best friend or the grandmother of whoever had the nerve to put this lump of unforgivably hideous rot on the market. The only point I can think of in *Cougar Force*'s favour is that the hero does mildly amusing things if you leave the controls alone for a while. This is good, because if you buy this game, you're going to want to leave the controls alone for a very very long time indeed. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

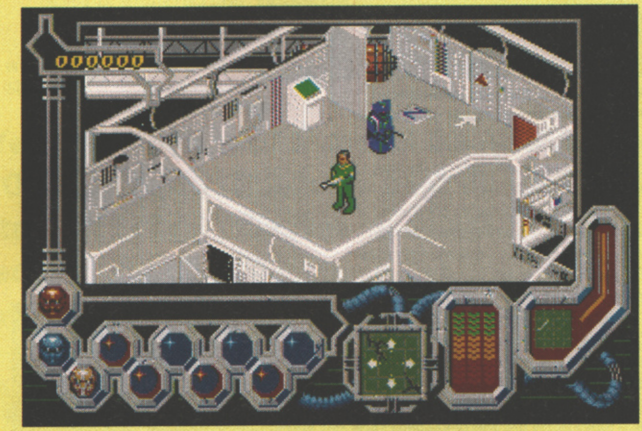
THE BOTTOM LINE

Every month I think I've seen the worst full-price game ever, and every month I'm wrong. This is too crap for words, but luckily not too crap for a number, and that number is...

18 PERCENT

Interesting game design, but why spoil it with pointless cock-ups?

WRECKERS



Lookout, he's behind you! (Thankfully he's on your side. And no, he might not look very impressive, but at least he's got better dress sense than your character!)

Publisher: Audiogenic
Price: £24.99
Authors: Denton Designs, Warren Cann (music)
Release: Out now

Programming team Denton Designs are one of the longest-lived crews currently working in the industry. They rose from the ashes of Imagine, one of the first major software houses, and have a string of acclaimed 8-bit hits behind them, including *Gift From The Gods*, *Shadowfire*, *The Great Escape* and *Enigma Force*, as well as *When Time Stood Still*, which marked their first foray into the world of 16-bit. That game was followed by the rather obscure *Eco* for Ocean and Millennium's *Eye Of Horus*, but since then Denton have lain rather low. Their return to the public eye is marked by *Wreckers*, an isometric-3D scrolling arcade adventure runaround type of thing set in a space station under attack from horrible green slimy monsters – an obvious relation to their similarly designed biggest hits like *The Great Escape*. It's nice to see that some things never change...

Denton have called in the experts for help with this game – Warren Cann from Ultravox provides the music and sound effects are in the hands of the well-known David Whittaker. It's a shame they didn't call on someone to do the animation while they were about it, as the characters move in that great glide-o-mation (TM) style that I thought we'd all seen the back of years ago (legs animated, but not bearing any relation to the character's actual movement). To be fair though, the graphics are otherwise good, with the glass-walled space station nicely-rendered and smoothly-scrolling. But I'm getting ahead of myself here.

The idea of the game is to repel an attack on your space station by acid-secreting green meanies.

You do this by hoovering them up in a strange vacuum-cleaner attachment as they approach the station, by floating around in a space suit and zapping them as they eat through the walls, or by shooting them from inside as they roam around the place and multiply.

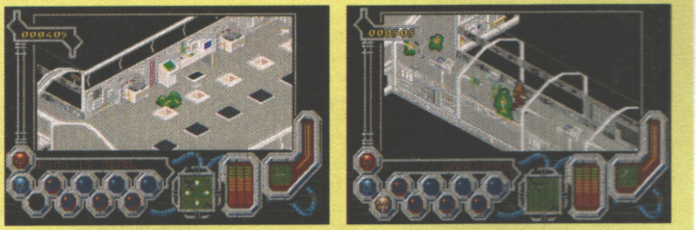
You have three officers to do the job with, and you can enlist the help of up to ten programmable droids. As well as destroying the invaders, you also have to keep all the essential systems of the station running – if the aliens destroy any of those, the station will self-destruct and you'll be done for. Plenty of stuff to do, then, but how much fun will you have doing it?

Not all that much, if my experience is anything to go by. *Wreckers* is a slick and stylish game, dragged into the mire of mediocrity by a whole slew of design flaws. Firstly, the diagonal controls are unnatural, uncomfortable and awkward on the joystick, and in the firefights with the bad guys you'll spend half your time running in completely the wrong direction. Secondly, the game is badly balanced. Nothing very much happens for ages, then you're suddenly overwhelmed by dozens of green slimies in ten seconds flat.

Thirdly, it's all been over-complicated by the addition of lots of unnecessary little extra bits which detract from the game's sense of focus. (The droid-programming, for example, is largely pointless and unexciting, and requires you to put in a lot of effort for results that you don't actually get to see, and are therefore intangible.)

Fourthly, there are several stupid and illogical game rules, the most aggravating of which is that when you go outside the station to zap some baddies, the game insists that you return through the same airlock you left from. It's incredibly annoying to be flying around, see a huge gang of space creeps inside the station right beside an airlock, and yet have to trek halfway round the station before you can get back in to go and blast them. There isn't really any sensible reason for this, and it smacks of bad planning, not to mention a lack of playtesting.

It's not all bad news for *Wreckers* though, as it does have a lot of atmosphere and a fair smattering of indisputably positive features. I particularly liked the way your officers are turned into strange zombie-like jelly monsters when they die, which then become particularly evil enemies, for instance. The action is fast and zappy throughout, and essentially there's a really good game in here. If only it wasn't buried beneath such a pointless mound of cock-ups. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



This is what *shouldn't* happen: one of the good guys meets his fate at the hands of the green slime, only to reappear a few screens later as an evil slime mutant himself. (Eek!)

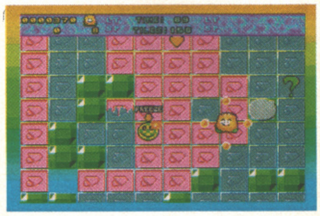
THE BOTTOM LINE

Potentially great game, drowned under a massive weight of totally unnecessary nitpicky details. Not bad, but nowhere near as good as it could have been.

64 PERCENT

SUPER SKWEEK

Publisher: Loriciel
Price: £19.99
Authors: Laurent Adriti, Stephane Ducase (graphics), Olivier Delerue (sound)
Release: Out now



Colour is the name of the game (well actually, it's *Super Skweek*).

The aptly named *Super Skweek* is actually the follow up to *Skweek*, a game which I personally thought was pretty good (though not many other people seemed to agree with me). In fact, I thought I'd do a bit of a survey by going round the office and asking everyone a series of questions to see what they thought, and at the end of it drawing up a pie chart or something. (But I didn't).

But anyway, what you want to know is what's the game all about. Well, no problem – here goes. You take control of what appears to be a clump of yellow cotton wool on legs ('Skweek') who has to walk up and down rather a lot of vertically scrolling levels built up out of tiles. Each tile changes from blue to pink when walked over, so the idea is to, as the saying goes, 'paint the town red' (erm, except here you have to 'paint the level pink'). It all sounds fairly simple – in fact, simple enough to be rather limiting – but luckily there's a lot more to it than that. The tiles are laid out in the form of a maze for a start, with walls to get in your way and holes to fall through (and die in). They don't all just sit there either – some disintegrate, some cause you to slip, some are higher up than others and some conceal secret passages. And then there are the baddies which – *Pacman*-style – prove deadly to the touch.

And finally, warranting a new paragraph I believe, there are the bonuses. We're talking oodles of them too – at least fifty according to the instructions, and many of them usable at the same time. Most of them take the form of extra fire-power and changes in the way you paint things, but there are loads of other interesting ones too, including one which allows you to freeze all the baddies (sending you straight onto the next level), and another that provides a map. These bonus can either be a) picked up after they appear or b) purchased with cash (which appears after you've killed a baddie) from a special shop section, which appears at certain tiles.

In a concluding sort of way, I'd say that this is really rather an original, wacky, cute, addictive, enjoyable (etc) but ever-so-slightly repetitive sort of game. There are 225 levels (which you can play either in order or sort of randomly) including bonus levels and some sections where you have to kill monsters or rescue skweekettes instead of simply paint, so there's more than enough to keep you going. And there's even a construction kit that allows you to design your own levels if you get bored.

In fact, neat touches abound in this colourful, manic and ever-so-slightly-French (ie odd) cutesy arcade puzzler inspiring me leap up in the air, and shout 'Hooray'. • *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A cute, addictive and well presented little number providing a neat balance between puzzle and arcade qualities. I like it.

75 PERCENT

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE

Publisher: CDS
Price: £24.99
Authors: Matrix Developments
Release: Out now

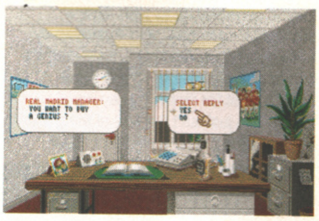
Try taking a black Biro and neatly adding the word 'Manager' to the title above, and you'll probably have sussed out what this one's all about already.

Things, though, have come a long way since the original 8-bit football manager game (called, curiously enough, *Football Manager*); there's a twelve page manual (with very small print) lurking in the depth of the box for a start, so you can see that there's rather a lot more to this game than one might first expect. Nevertheless, not much has changed in the gameplay department – it's the usual case of picking a team to manage, and then managing them to your heart's content, or (much more likely) until you get fired.

The game is played mainly from behind your desk where all your decisions are made (by selection) over the phone and via your intercom by talking to other managers, the press, your team and your secretary. If you remember, it's a good idea to keep regularly checking your diary to see what's on the agenda.

The remainder of the game consists of a board meeting once a week, which more or less informs you of how you're doing, training sessions where you fix the training of your individual players as you see 'fit' (ho ho), and then of course the match, where you pick the team, then decide on one of sixteen different game tactics to try and win with.

Believe it or not (for the sake of this review, you understand) I have actually played the game in some depth, and so →



REAL MADRID MANAGER:
YOU WANT TO BUY
A GENIUS ?

SELECT REPLY
YES
NO

Okay, so it's not really very visually appealing. What do you expect from a footy management game?

The most bodacious computer licence ever reaches the Amiga (but bodacious it isn't).

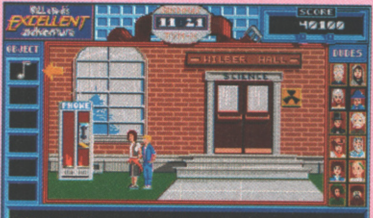
BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

This is your time-travelling buddy, Rufus. What a dude.

Publisher: Accolade
Authors: Scott R Lahteine, Off The Wall (design), C.S. Wayne (graphics), Douglas Mackell (sound)
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now

Okay, first things first. *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* is based upon the minor cult film of the same name. If you aren't familiar with it then a) you are too old b) you are too boring and c) you are probably too intelligent to be reading this. Luckily I don't fit into any of those categories, and have been a long time fan of Bill & Ted (not least because of an enormous number of links it rejoices in with the world of rock music, which are far too convoluted to go into here).

The basic premise of the film (and indeed the game) is that Bill & Ted are two LA valley-dudes, who have formed a band called the Wyld Stallynz (with a view to recruiting Edward Van Halen), but have run into problems at school. Unless they get an A+ for their history test, they'll be kicked out. Enter Rufus, a totally cool, time-travelling dude (yes, this review is going to be brimming with corny LA-speak). Rufus informs them that the music of the Wyld Stallynz actually forms the basis for future civilisation, and that passing the history test is a pivotal point for our heroes. Thus, they are given possession of a time travelling phone booth (Well, what did you expect? A police box?), a directory of time zones to dial up, and a mission to find lotsa dudes from various points in history, bring them back to school, and use them in a seminar to pass the exam. Simple, huh?



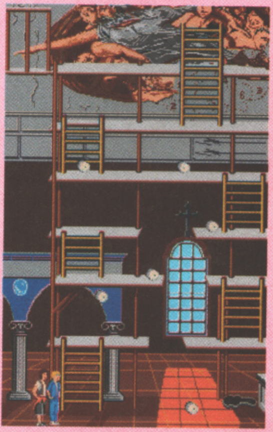
Bill & Ted in search of that dead dude, Einstein.

But what of the game itself? Ah, yes. It basically involves moving Bill & Ted around various time zones and trying to locate famous dudes, from Joan Of Arc to Genghis Khan. Objects are littered around the place, which when given to various characters will cause them to follow you (it's not giving too much away to tell you that giving a fire extinguisher to the lightly toasted Joan of Arc will convince her to join you, for instance). Then it's simply a matter of popping one or two of them into the phone booth, dropping them off at the local shopping mall back in the present day and going off in search of more dudes. Some situations aren't quite so straightforward, and involve weird sub-games including a 2D maze cum cat-and-mouse affair and even a (very) simplified *Donkey Kong* variant. *Bill & Ted* is nothing if not bizarre (dudes).

Right now that we've got the complicated waffly stuff outta the way, it's time for some bodacious analysis. After playing the game for fifteen minutes, something strange happened. I finished it.

I decided this was either down to my own excellence or something to do with playing the game at the lowest difficulty setting. However, after trying the harder levels, I can safely say it's still not exactly the most difficult game in the world – and quite frankly not the best either.

I've rarely seen a game design as simple as this one, and it doesn't help the program any in the longevity stakes. If anybody out there remembers the original *Back To The Future* game, they'll have a basic idea of what to expect (though *Bill & Ted* isn't nearly as bad). Despite the sampled sound and cool references to the film, the whole thing feels quite tacky. Having said that, I actually quite enjoyed it. Sorry and everything, and I'm perfectly willing to admit that it's probably down to my love of the film, but it's fun. It's also undeniably very, very average. And sadly that's something a Bill & Ted game should never be. Excellent, yes. Bodacious, most surely. But never average. • *MARK RAMSHAW*

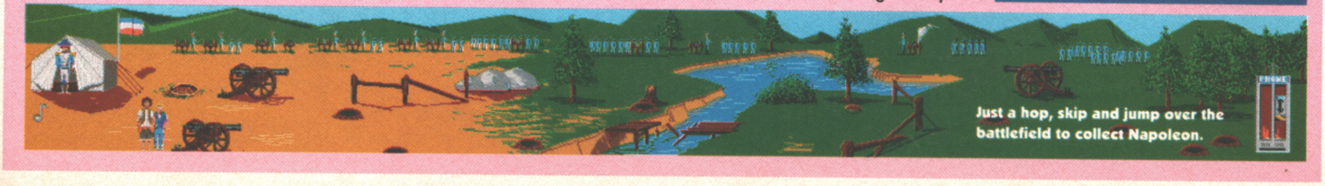


Climb the ladders, jump over the paint pots, and collect old Mikey. Look familiar?

THE BOTTOM LINE

The whole thing is just too undemanding and unspectacular to merit the asking price. It would be ideal for the younger players, but older dudes really needn't bother – it just isn't excellent enough to really cut it.

58 PERCENT



Just a hop, skip and jump over the battlefield to collect Napoleon.

can certainly vouch that it all feels very realistic – making a wrong decision somewhere really seems to alter events, as does upsetting the other characters (which you can do in such simple ways as going home every day without doing any actual work, for instance). The game seems generally up to 1991 Amiga standards – complex, and illustrated by some lovely graphics (well, lovely for this sort of game anyway) – but the fact remains that for many (I'd say most) people this just isn't the sort of thing that's likely to light their fire. • *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE

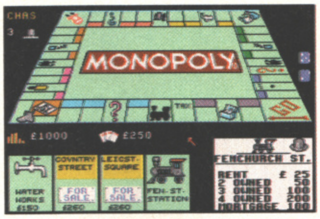
An up-to-date version of the rather old footie management type game. it's dubious that there's enough here to keep things burning long enough to justify 25 quid. Rather you than me.

63 PERCENT

MONOPOLY

Publisher: Mastertronic
Price: £19.99
Authors: Leisure Genius
Release: Out now

Where could you buy a house in Oxford Street for £200? *Monopoly*, of course. Traditionally this would be achieved by displaying your 'Oxford Street' card to the banker, handing over a couple a pink ones and getting a small, green piece of plastic in return. But the advance of technology means that, having purchased a copy of the Amiga version, the transaction is accomplished by picking 'Buy Houses' from the 'Build' menu, moving your cursor to Oxford Street and waiting for £200 to be deducted from your account. Apart from subtleties like that, this is more or less an exact replica of the board game, and its appeal will depend entirely upon your opinion of the original.



Checking out the development possibilities of Fenchurch Station.

To recap, *Monopoly*'s a sort of 'property' game, where loads of players sit round a board throwing dice, buying squares and building houses and hotels on them. There's a fair amount of skill involved, but success in the long run is governed mainly by chance – you just have to hope you land on squares worth buying and, having blown all your hard-earned on a streetful of hotels, that everyone else lands on them before you go broke. And that's what I hate about it, quite frankly. It seems an enormous waste of effort to spend hours planning strategies when success or failure is likely to be dictated by a single roll of a couple of dice. No-one seems to agree, though, so I'm probably just being my usual nihilistic self.

The logic of converting such a game to computer is another matter. I can't really see six players gathering round the Amiga after dinner, so the only advantage of it seems to be the availability of computer-controlled opponents to practice against. And even that seems a bit silly. It's a perfectly good conversion, then, but a bit of a pointless one. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A sound enough conversion, but the board game's a whole lot more accessible (and cheaper).

60 PERCENT

An everyday tale of bad translation, sex, farm animals, and, erm, we'd better stop there.

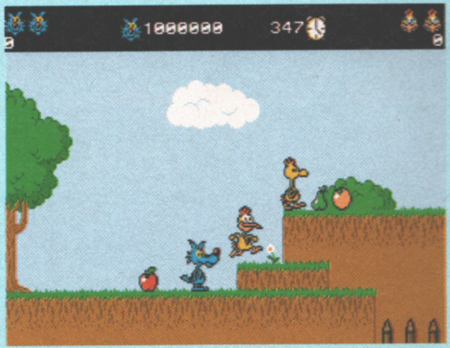
LUPO ALBERTO

Publisher: Idea (The Software Business)
Price: £25.53
Authors: Mario Bianchi, Eugenio Ciceri, Steed Kulka, Luca Stradiotto (graphics), Alex Ravelli & Gianluca Rotondo (music)
Release: Out now

It's very easy to laugh at other people's mistakes – especially when they're the consequence of translating a foreign language into English. So I will – hahaha.

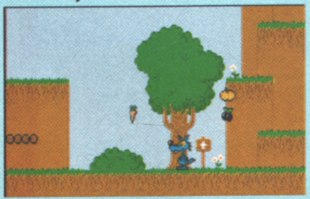
Lupo Alberto is the latest export from Italy. He's a cartoon character – a wolf in fact – who, in the eyes of the manual, 'is friendly, sharp and at the same time shy. Gifted with artistic sensitivity, he pays attention to the quality of life and to social and environmental problems but without giving up his enjoyment of life.'

The quality of Lupo's life to which he pays attention is a hen called Marta. She wants to be alone, with Lupo, so he can put his gift of artistic sensitivity into action. But the course of true love never runs smooth, even for anthropomorphic wildlife. There's a social and environmental problem to be addressed – like finding somewhere with some privacy so the two chums can get even friendlier. Lupo is a shy guy after all.

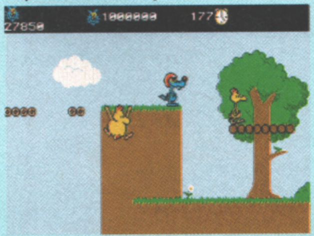


Lupo looks on with a smile as his beloved takes a bold leap upwards. Shake that tail feather!

The manual goes on: 'His success is due to the fact that he is always cheerful, a fine example of an approach to life that overcomes any obstacle, even the most difficult.' This is true. The wide-eyed and bushy-tailed Lupo has a permanent grin on his face (but then, wouldn't you with what he's got coming to him?). He obviously hasn't realised that he has only two frames of animation to his credit. Come to think of it, everyone in the world of *Lupo Alberto*'s only has two frames of animation, so he has no real reason to feel insecure.



When Lupo lands on special invisible spots dotted around the landscape, previously hidden pieces of fruit are thrown up. Collect them for bonus points, why don'tcha?



Lupo with his trendy crash helmet mercilessly pulverises the assorted animal opposition.

It's not a problem though, this animation drought. In fact it makes everything look as though it's dancing to the happy 'n' jolly sound of the marvellous music (which on the later stages has a distinctly Benny Hill feel to it).

Lupo's mission turns out to be a cut down *Super Mario Bros* of sorts. A scrolling, platform-based landscape is patrolled by creatures with differing intelligence and movement patterns, the death of some resulting in the appearance of special features for Lupo to catch. Lupo is a little sluggish to control, it must be said, but he is very manoeuvrable, being capable of jumping at different heights and moving in the air. It may sound trivial, but this is something which many platform pranks fail to deliver. It certainly helps when it comes to jumping on the adversaries in order to kill them.

Before the feminists get on their high horses, let me point out that the roles are reversible. If the mood takes you, you can play with Marta instead who has slightly different running and jumping characteristics to Lupo. Better still, you can grab a friend for some two-player action. Yes, the two animal lovers can go in search of peace together – simultaneously on screen as it happens. And what a hoot that is. The going gets hilarious whether Lupo and Marta help each other negotiate the obstacles or not, especially as the scrolling can't keep up when one character progresses faster than the other.

There's more to this scenario than meets the eye, however. Printed in the back of the manual are 10 three-frame comic strips, each gaining plenty in translation but with the final frame missing. The only way to discover the outcome is to complete a level and see it on screen. An incentive if ever there was one.

Lupo Alberto made me laugh and laugh. And when I'd stopped laughing I laughed some more. I'm still laughing now in fact – hahahaha! See. That's not to say that *Lupo*'s not without room for improvement. Its addictive nature makes the lengthy disk accessing to load a level all the more annoying. Some secret rooms and other forms of hidden bonuses would have iced the cake too.

In stark contrast to all the deadly serious simulations currently doing the rounds on the Amiga, *Lupo Alberto* is fun. And funny. Now there are two sound reasons to buy it. • *GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Uncomplicated platform action which would suit the younger player if it wasn't quite so awkward in places.

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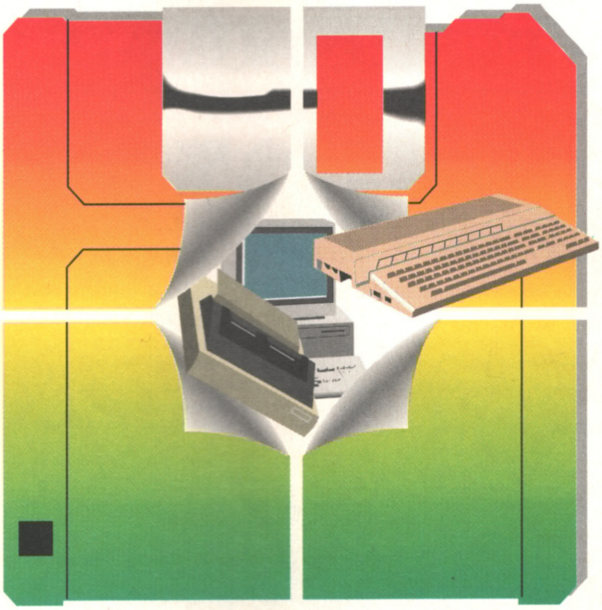

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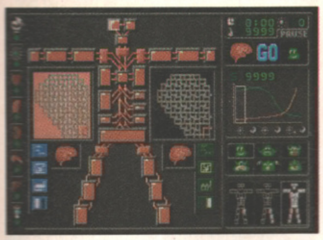


Hi-tech biology lessons in *Germ Crazy.*

Publisher: Electronic Zoo
Price: £25.99
Authors: Open Mind
Release: Out now

You've doubtless played *Sim City*, and ever-so-possibly *Sim Earth* too (if not on an Amiga) so now why not have a crack at 'Sim Body' – or *Germ Crazy* as it's actually called?

It's kind of a 'body simulator' (hence the crap intro) in which you've got to ensure the smooth running of your patient by fighting off any baddies (or 'germs') that attack him. A bit like the board game 'Operation' ('My turn to operate!'), only the funny bone doesn't keep disappearing between the various pieces of cardboard.

And you'll certainly have your work cut out for you, with four limbs and several major organs to keep tabs on, and the threat of viral infection from all quarters. Rather more pressing, though, is the phenomenal number of icons and sub-menus you'll have to wade through in order to get anything to happen.

They're jolly confusing indeed – there's a different icon for just about everything, and none of them are in the least bit intuitive – which is the main reason for the slightly middling mark down there. (Go on, have a peek.)

Returning to the plot side of things, how about a rundown of what you've got to do? Right, the body is split into several sections, each of which is vulnerable to attack. In order to stave off infection you've got a range of 'agents' available, which range from antibodies to microscopic tanks and laser guns. These can be assembled into armies and marched around the body (via the blood stream) to where they're needed most, which is where strategy and planning enter the arena. You can probably afford to lose the odd arm here and there, but if a major organ goes down you're in trouble. Other things to consider are eating/sleeping, drugs and hospital treatment.

So what we've got, then, is an original and probably quite challenging strategy game that's suffocating under the vast amount of guff that's been heaped onto it. The impossibly steep learning curve (you've really got to learn the whole manual off by heart before you can begin to even think about a tentative first game) is largely a result of all those unfathomable icons, most of which would best be trimmed away in favour of a few drop down menus or something. I suspect that what lurks underneath is actually quite simple and probably quite easy to play if you're the game designer, but for the rest of us it's a nightmare and you're unlikely to have the patience to really persevere. It's an interesting idea which seems to have got a bit out of hand somewhere along the line. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

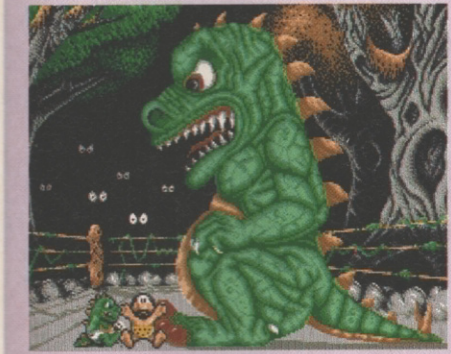
THE BOTTOM LINE

It all sounds like fun on paper, but the way it's been put together is far from satisfactory. A shame, really.

57 PERCENT

You've played the demo on our cover disk, now read the review...

PREHISTORIK



Ever-so-slightly ludicrous boxing sequence features one giant (static) baddie and a host of distracting babies.

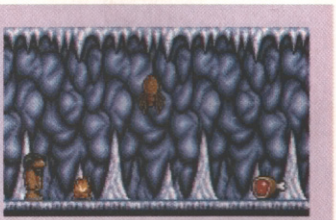
Publisher: Titus
Price: £25.53
Authors: Carlo Perconti (program), Jean Christophe Allessandri (graphics)
Release: Out now

It's a bit odd to find myself reviewing this just now, because there's a demo on this month's cover mounted disk allowing you to see it and decide just how good it is (or isn't) on your own. Still, it's my opinion you want here so it's my opinion you shall have, and, actually, I think it's rather good. Not as good as the excellent (and similarly themed) *Toki* or *Chuck Rock* admittedly, but a fun and likeable platform romp nonetheless.

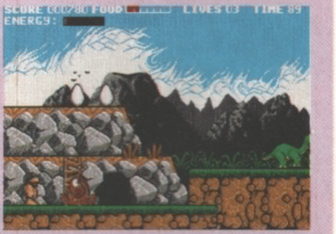
So what's it all about? Well, you play *Prehistorik*, a very hungry caveman. This isn't any sort of elaborate rescue mission you're on, as it is in the games just mentioned, but simply a quest for food – if you've ever wondered how the dinosaurs died out, it's not because of the ice age or a meteorite fall or anything fancy like that, but simply because *Prehistorik* ate them all! You see, he's only allowed off a level if he manages to club unconscious and then walk over (and so nosh) 99.9 per cent of all dinos/grizzly bears/unnameable prehistoric thingies he comes across. I think the game's a bit too strict with this – it would be better if you were allowed to ignore more of the creatures if you wanted, and still get off the level – but it's not too big a fault. As it stands though, it can get annoying (and repetitive), especially when you find you've got to trek all the way back to somewhere near the start of the level (if the landscape lets you that is) to trough a few last monsters to fill you up.

Levels are your standard platform and ladders sort of thing – in fact, the whole thing has something of the feel of a *Super Mario* game, though without the depth or finely tuned gameplay. The creatures are undeniably cute (the little bears still wag their tales when unconscious, for instance) and the standard world designs (an ice world with penguins and so on, a jungle one with monkeys and the like) are well done. Unusually, between the proper levels comes a sort of boxing match affair (quite what the explanation for this is, I don't know) where *Prehistorik* has to take on some giant dino, caveman or whatever while batting a never-ending procession of smaller versions off the screen. Reasonably cute and fun, but slight and likely to become a bit of a pain after a while, you could say.

Other faults? Well, the game only scrolls on a screen when you get right to the edge of it, which seems unnecessary (apparently a hang-over of the original version being done in ST STOS) and the wait while it reloads the levels and so on can be a bit of a pain. You could also argue that the whole thing gets a bit samey after a while too – more hectic platform-leaping action and less of this rather repetitive bonking-dinosaurs-on-the-head-and-then-tucking-in stuff would have been nice – but basically it's a pretty, appealing and actually rather loveable little romp which only suffers a bit because its two most obvious rivals are so good, not because of any real faults in the game itself. • *MATT BIELBY*



Just one (edible?) arachnid stands between *Prehistorik* and a tasty morsel.

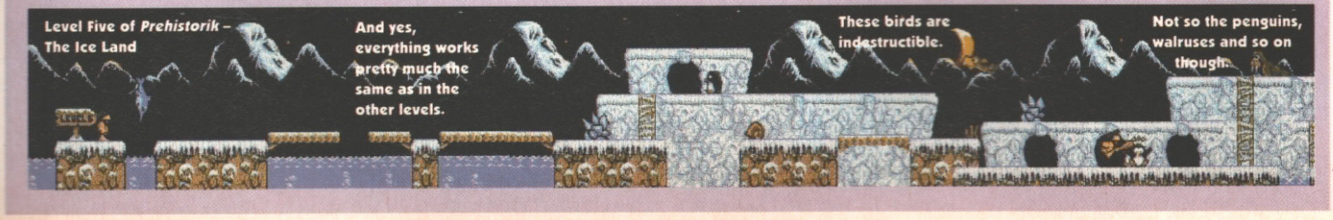


Another prospective dino-burger attempts to recover from a good bashing.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Likeable caveman platformer with plenty of 'quite nice' bits to it, but little that really stuns. Good, but buy *Toki* and (of course) *Chuck Rock* first.

73 PERCENT



Level Five of *Prehistorik* – The Ice Land

And yes, everything works pretty much the same as in the other levels.

These birds are indestructible.

Not so the penguins, walruses and so on though.

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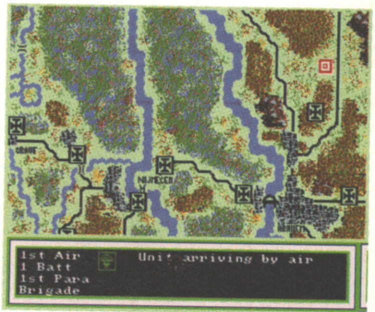
ARNHEM

Publisher: CCS
Author: R.T.Smith
Price: £19.95
Release: Out now

If you thought adventure games were the unacceptable face of computer entertainment you've obviously never played a wargame. Instead of reading pages of text and typing things in, wargamers while away the hours moving little flashing squares (troops) around, keeping an eye on stamina points and planning strategies. However, just like adventure games, wargames are a lot more involved than they look and once you're hooked you'll stay hooked (although the chances of that happening are pretty slim, believe me). This one's a conversion of an old Spectrum game that was generally thought of as one of the best of its type. It's a recreation of Operation Market Garden – an Allied paratroop landing in Nazi-occupied Holland – which failed in reality but which you might just be able pull off in the comfort of your own bedroom.



1st Air
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1st Para
Brigade
Unit arriving by air

Now you too can recreate those classic moments of 8-bit wargaming with the Amiga *Arnhem*.

In the past I've tried to be patient with wargames. After all, they've got a dedicated following, and if you're prepared to make allowances for all the flashing squares and movement phases they can be quite absorbing. But on loading *Arnhem* I'm afraid I jumped the tracks. Little has been done to exploit the Amiga's potential. The map is a bit more colourful than the original's, and there are a couple of sampled sound effects if you listen hard enough, but that's it. Even the instructions consist of the original 1985 Spectrum edition with a little inserted bit. It's just not on, really.

While this sort of thing might just about be got away with on 8-bit machines – if only for flying in the face of convention – on the Amiga it looks hopelessly crap. Even the most bearded of wargamers is likely to be left wondering whether he'd have been better off sticking with his ZX81. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A sad relic from a past era. It's just too impenetrably primitive to stand a chance. Even wargamers will be disappointed with this.

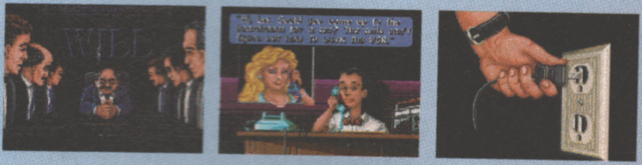
37 PERCENT

Game: Les Manley in Search For The King
Publisher: Accolade
Authors: Robert Calfee, Steve Cartwright (design)
Price: £34.99
Available: Out now

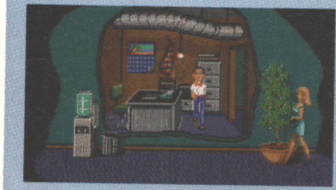
Once they've completed Lucasfilm's *Monkey Island*, adventurers can

SEARCH FOR T

The King is missing. Where can he be? And just how much money could be made if he returned? As the intro sequence unfolds we learn of WILL TV's plans to find The King with a viewer competition. Les Manley looks on with interest. The poor deluded man thinks that *he* can find The King. Oh dear.



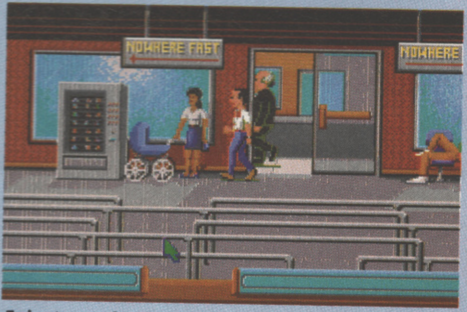
How's this for a weird game? *Les Manley In Search For The King* is about some dork who's idea of a good time is to hang around in electrical stores, and whose favourite food is listed as Microwave. For reasons which I haven't the time or space to go into, he sets himself a mission, one which will take him to the most rockin' parts of the USA, introducing him to interesting people, and (more importantly) cute chicks. His mission: To find The King. Bizarre is not the word (but it's close enough).



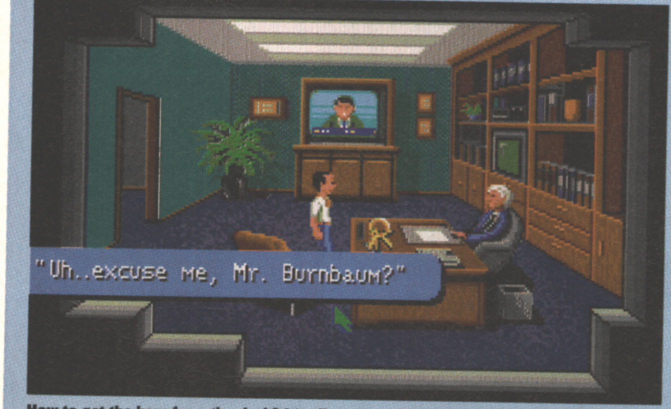
This is where Les works and practically lives. Nice hole-in-the-wall effect – pity Les can't appreciate that cute chick.

For a game which is so obviously about The King (you know, the hamburger-eating, pelvis-gyrating, Viva-Las-Vagasing rock'n'roller), it's rather odd to see a disclaimer, informing the world that any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental, accidental or unintended. Neat, though not quite true. But anyway, onto the game proper.

First up (as is the norm with American stuff) we have the lengthy intro sequence – something which consolidates the feel of quality with this product. It's good to see an American game which isn't a direct port from some poor PC version. All too often the accompanying guff is of excellent quality, but the game itself is shoddily put together. None of that for *Les Manley* though. There are over seventy backdrops, each looking very polished and individual. The characters also have their own visual identity, and are remarkably well animated. The attention to detail even extends to Les getting darker when in shadow, and having a reflection in pools of water. The whole thing has a 'confidence' which so many games (particularly adventures) lack.



Trying to get a bus, Les might get taken for a ride. Far better to walk – after all, a clown like Les should *fair* well. (Ahem).



"Uh..excuse me, Mr. Burnbaum?"

How to get the keys from the desk? It's all a matter of keeping the boss occupied. Money is usually as good a distraction as any.

Okay, I guess comparisons with the recent *Monkey Island* are inevitable. Both games require one meg, are sprawled over several disks, and both are modern adventures laced with humour. At a glance, both products look very similar indeed. Could this be an adventuring renaissance? Well maybe, but it's when *Search For The King* is pitted against Lucasfilm's masterpiece that the cracks become evident.

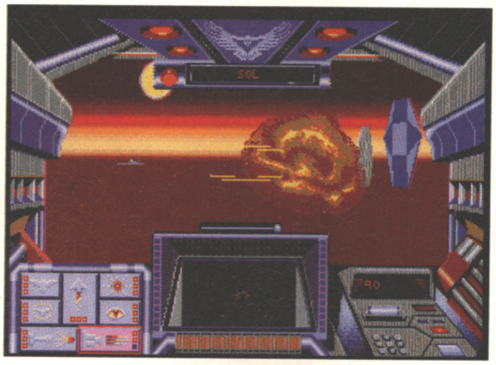
The game is caught between two stools with its user interface. The programmers were eager to move with the times and incorporate slick point-and-click control styles, but they were obviously loathe to abandon the standard text entry system. This is understandable, but as Lucasfilm's *Monkey Island* proved, a pure mouse-driven system is more effective (given the constraints of current technology). The mouse and text systems just don't seem compatible, and although its certainly less unwieldy than Sierra's recent efforts, it doesn't do the player any favours.

STELLAR 7

Publishers: Dynamix/Sierra
Authors: Damon Slye
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now

Ah yes, I remember it well. *Stellar 7* was one of those classic American C64 titles released a good few years back, in the days when wireframe 3D vector graphics seemed like a really neat idea. Now, for some reason known only to them, Dynamix have snapped up the rights to produce a version for the new computer generation. But does *Stellar 7* really belong in this decade? Well, that kind of depends on which way you look at it.

'How can you expect people to pay £25 for an ancient *Battlezone* clone?' cried one person. I can see their point of view (that's right, Mr Comedian, the first person perspective one). Plus, I have to admit that after my first go I was ready to write the whole thing off as a very big software disaster. Despite the claims of 'ultra-fast solid 3D graphics like never before', the program seemed unforgivably sluggish, and something was definitely absent. What it lacked was the adrenalin surge of other *Battlezone*-influenced blasts – this month's *Encounter*, for one.



Suffering withdrawal from *Battlezone*? *Stellar 7* could be the answer. Though never providing the adrenalin rush of the classic arcade game, it's got enough add-on bits to make it worthwhile.

Then I discovered this neat little slider bar to reduce the level of graphic detail. With trepidation, I knocked it down to half way. Wow, almost no loss of detail, but a definite improvement in the speed department. It's at this point that I really found myself warming to it. It may have caught me in a good mood, but there's something endearing about *Stellar 7*'s singlemindedness. Hey, it's not often you get a *Battlezone*-clone with power-ups, extra equipment (including a jump facility!), and end-of-level baddies. I've ran out of excuses. I don't know why I, I just like it. Having said that, I wouldn't really recommend anybody to put this at the top of their shopping list. Let's just say owning one is nothing to feel embarrassed about. By the way, is there a *Battlezone* revival on right now, or what? • *MARK RAMSHAW*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Lacks action, needs one 1 meg, and is a re-write of a six year old game that was old-fashioned to start with. But what the hell, I like it. Now, can we have *Robotron* back in fashion please?

67 PERCENT

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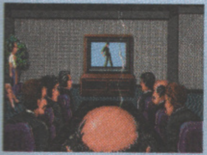
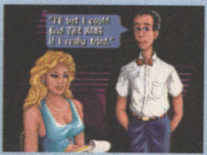
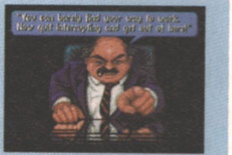
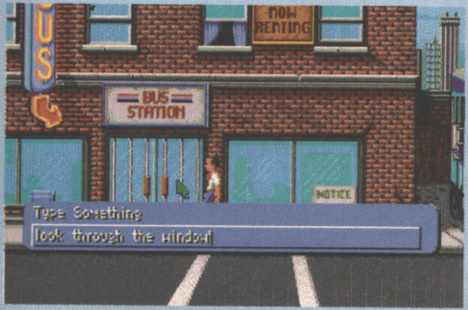
check into Les Manley's Heartbreak Hotel.






"You can barely find your way to work. Now quit interrupting and get out of here!"

HE KING



Type Something
look through the window

Getting wordy with Les. Remember, the bus isn't the only way out of town. (Mmmm, wonder what's going on inside, though).

Moving Les around the screen for instance takes a mammoth amount of effort. When compared to *Monkey Island*'s system where you simply point and the character will make his own way there, here you've got to point the mouse to every little position, navigating Les around furniture and the like, which quickly becomes fairly irritating. Add to that the fact that the most commands don't generate anything like an interesting response, and the whole thing begins to feel very stilted and artificial.

And then there's the humour – such an important part of *Monkey Island*. Here it's a bit, well, lacking – never sufficiently sustained, and while the flagrant air of sexism adds an edge (whether it's actually poking fun at sexism or using it is open to debate) everything's far too American to really work in the UK. It really wouldn't have been hard to make the jokes a bit more universal in nature.

Players of *Leisure Suit Larry*'s latest escapades should have no problem identifying with Les Manley, or getting around his Manley world for that matter. It's just that after the silk of *Monkey Island*, why settle for polyester (or something like that)? • *MARK RAMSHAW*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Semi-successful humour and gorgeous graphics paint an interesting picture of the weird side of America, but there are just too many areas where the player becomes frustrated – not with the adventure itself, but with the way in which it is played. It doesn't open up any new avenues for adventuring, and so will remain a minority thing. It never reaches the dizzy heights of *Monkey Island*, and that's as good a reason as any to penalise it.

71 PERCENT

ECO PHANTOMS

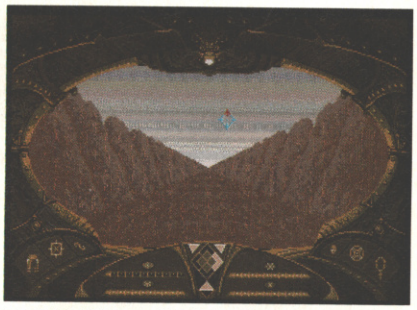
Publisher: Electronic Zoo
Authors: Splinter Vision
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

I wonder how many games begin life as an interesting graphical effect and then slowly evolve into something playable through having controls, weapons and a plot sellotaped onto them. That's what seems to have happened with *Eco Phantoms*, anyway. At its heart is a landscape-coming-towards-you effect. Not a particularly good one, mind, but enough to form the basis of some sort of space exploration game.

The landscape in question is a sort of gully, blocked off at each end, which you can move backwards and forwards along and from one side to the other a bit. This is achieved by moving the mouse in the direction you want to go until the appropriate corner of the cursor lights up, then clicking the left button. And, yes, it's as awkward as it sounds. If a little arrow on the dashboard appears you can turn through 90 degrees to find yourself in another gully.

The explanation for all this? Well, you're flying a spaceship which you've hijacked from a bunch of aliens. These aliens have invaded earth and sucked it dry of all life. Your task is to try to reverse the situation by collecting codes (or something like that).

Occasionally baddies appear which need to be shot, and very occasionally indeed you'll encounter a building. At this point, having entered the appropriate access code, you'll need to dispatch a robot to explore it. This means playing a simple sub-game where you move your robot around the screen, shooting things and finding codes.



The future, Victorian-style in *Eco Phantoms*. Interestingly (or not) the whole game looks remarkably similar to an ancient Lucasfilm C64 game, *The Eidolon*.

That's not all though. Various other bits and pieces have been thrown in too, in an attempt to add depth. There's an 'engines' screen which you've got to bring up every so often to add oil to the engines (and so stop them overheating) and a 'passenger' screen where you look after any prisoners you've rescued. All this takes place in stoney silence, bar the gentle throb of your engines.

Hmm. I'm not probably not making it sound very exciting, am I? And it isn't. I'm doing my best, honest, but this really is pretty dire – as I said, literally a landscape-coming-towards-you effect with a few graphical set pieces tacked on. It takes ages to work out what the blazes is meant to be happening anyway, and when you finally do you're left with a distinct empty feeling. Unless I'm missing out on something fairly major (I've studied the manual closely and I don't think I am, though) *Eco Phantoms* is utterly devoid of any form of playability as we know it. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

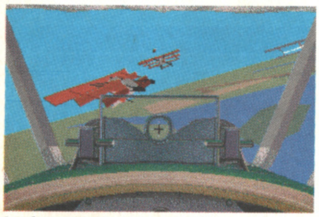
Pretty graphics, lots of controls and sub-games but nothing interesting to do. A sorry state of affairs, really.

53 PERCENT

BLUE MAX

Publisher: Mindscape
Authors: Three Sixty
Price: £34.99
Release: Out now

It seems to be flight sims a-go-go on the Amiga at the moment. You can't load up a game without bumping into solid 3D polygons and low flying aircraft. *Blue Max*, or *Aces Of The Great War* (Mindscape seem unable to decide which title to go for), has obviously been developed with the not-so-technical player in mind. Options are the order of the day, with a certain sacrifice made in the old realism department.



Looks great. Sounds great. Moves, feels and plays like a brick.

Rooted in the Great War (that's the first one for all you youngsters), it's chocabloc with bi-planes, tri-planes, the Allies, the Germans, and several shades of green. Reading through the manual and checking out the stills on the back of the box, I really got quite excited about the game. After all, if what they were intending to do (as it appears) is sacrifice a degree of actual simulation realism in favour of some pretty spanky action-packed 3D dogfights, then this looked like the game for me. The simultaneous two-player option seemed like a great idea too, something that could take the game into the realms of greatness...

Then I loaded it. Oh boy. This seems to becoming a recurring nightmare for me – one where everything happens in slow motion. You've guessed it, this is another stodgy flight sim, showing little or no concern for the player. Sure, they've sauced the whole thing up with loads of options, and you can reduce the level of graphic detail to make things run a bit faster, but it seems that programmers Three Sixty still have a thing or two to learn about fast, smooth 3D graphics. To get the game running at anything like acceptable speed means viewing everything through a tiny window, with no plane details visible. For Pete's sake, even a Sinclair Spectrum could do things better than this!

I'm disappointed, I really am. I've been waiting for some time for a successor to *F/A-18* or *F29*, and this sure isn't it. When will software companies realise that the primary objective of any game, be it a flight sim or anything else, is to entertain? True flight mechanics are all very well, but they shouldn't be included at the expense of playability. In fact, I challenge anybody to get any real pleasure out of playing this. Why should Amiga owners have to put up with software which hasn't been developed with the pleasure of the buyer in mind? • *MARK RAMSHAW*

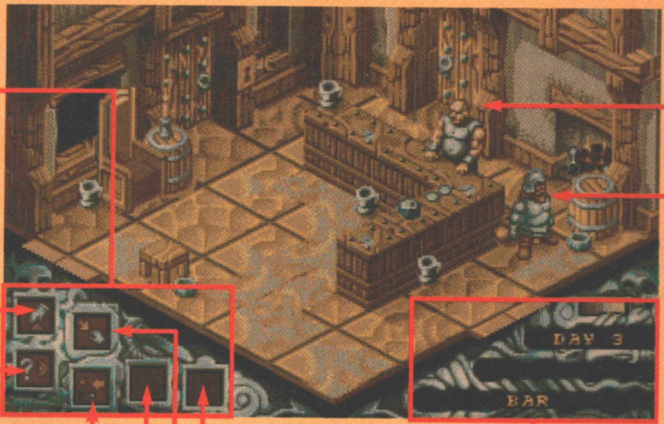
THE BOTTOM LINE

A game which aspires to greatness, but falls far short. It could have been a classic, and that's what makes me angry. The best I can say is 'nice sound'.

52 PERCENT

The Bitmap's first add-on disk – great for *Cadaver* fans, of sod all value to the rest of us.

CADAVER – THE PAYOFF



The series of little boxes on the left hand side of the screen contain your control icons – you can cycle between them as your needs require. There are fifteen or so in all, but here's a selection...

Take, which puts an object in your rucksack.

Search, which should provide you with information about an object.

Joystick – this one returns your character to movement control.

Pull (which allows you to drag an item) while below are two empty icon boxes.

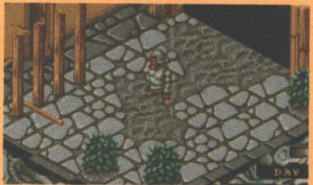
In this box, from the top down – your health bar, what day it is (in game terms), the object indicator (empty) and your location.

Watch that barman! The Inn might look ordinary (if a bit quiet) but he's about to do something very odd indeed!

And this is our hero. (It's a shame they couldn't have made him walk in a more convincing way than he does, but that would have meant a much more extensive re-write of the game).

Publisher: Renegade
Authors: Steve Kelly, Mike Montgomery, Dan Malone (graphics)
Price: £16.99
Release: Out now

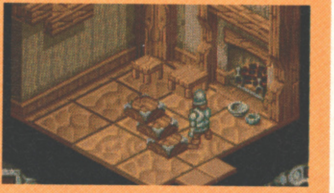
First things first – this isn't a complete game, it's a levels disk (the first one we've reviewed, in fact) and the only way you're going to be able to play it is if you have a copy of the real *Cadaver* to boot up first. Levels disks have become fairly popular over the last couple of years, though it's the first time the Bitmaps have done one – the idea is that you increase interest in a popular game, and satisfy the demands of fans for a sequel, without going to the time and effort of doing a full blown follow up. The downside is that it's only going to be of interest to owners of the original game – and ones who are desperate for more of the same, at that – so the market is limited. The plus side is that since all you're really doing is changing locations, graphics, and particular in-game tasks (as well as perhaps fixing a few bits and pieces you may have felt were wrong about the original game) it's really only a couple of week's work. This one costs two thirds of the price of the full *Cadaver*, but then it's a bit smaller (about two thirds of the size, in fact!) so all's fairly fair. (Or something).



One new thing this *Cadaver* add-on does is take us outside the confines of dungeons and the like and into the village streets.

So is it any good? Well, yes it is. The plot follows on neatly from the first game (our mercenary hero returns to collect his wages for the first mission, only to find that his employers have gone missing – what's up?), the main character still looks like his limbs aren't properly connected to his body when he walks (a bit of a downer) and overall everything gives the impression of being better than the first game, but not stunningly so. Puzzles are still a mix of arcade style jumping about, arcade adventure style lever pulling and text adventure style lateral thinking, but in some ways the new tasks seem a bit more action packed than the last, or at least a bit more visually interesting. The monsters you come across are no longer mindless baddies out just to get in your way, but form integral parts of the puzzles and can even, in some cases, be won over to your side and used to your advantage. Many of the locations are new too – the disk takes us outside into the streets of a village for the first time, for instance – and the distinctly Germanic look to the whole thing (from the names of the towns to the whole look and feel of your surroundings) goes up a notch as well, a neat reference to the particular success of the original game in Germany.

So there we have it. Lots of new rooms (200 or so), four new levels and a very professional looking product. Great news for fans of the first game, unlikely to be of any interest at all to people who didn't like it and, erm, that's it really. Levels disks, eh? Don't you just love them? • *MATT BIELBY*



The only way up to the door fitted half way up the wall is to build your own stairway – as here in fact.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Nice addition for all *Cadaver* fans, of little interest to anyone else. (Exactly as a levels disk should be really).

81 PERCENT

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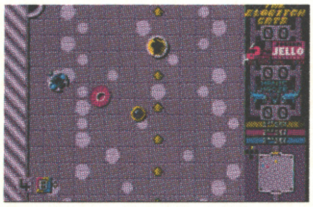
BUDGET

Ex-full price games at cheap and cheerful prices are fast swamping the budget market. Indeed, Prism's remarkable new range doesn't contain a single new title. Is this what Amiga owners want? Time will tell...

PROJECTYLE

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

A projectile is an object designed to be shot forwards, something like a cannon shell, bullet or rocket. Replace the 'i' with a 'y', however, and you've suddenly got a suitably futuristic yet aggressive computer game-type name. What's more, seeing as how *Projectyle* (the game) does indeed feature an object designed to be shot forwards (the ball), it's an apt one too.



Three player mayhem in *Projectyle*.

There are quite a few other objects in it as well, but they're not designed to be shot forwards. There are the players, five on each side. There are power-ups, which just sort of sit there until someone picks them up. There are the teams, three per match, which are designed to play against each other. And there's the pitch, which is spread over five rooms, each of which has a player from every team in it and some goals that're just, well, designed.

What you've got to do is knock the ball about and try to score as many goals as possible, something that isn't facilitated by the ice skating-style controls. And that's about it as far as 'things to say about it' are concerned. It really is that straightforward. And it's very fast and lots of fun – especially if you're playing with a couple of chums (you can have up to three players at once). If you're mate-less I'd think it'd place a bit of a question mark over lasting appeal, but it remains a simple, action packed concept that works. At this price you should at least consider it. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

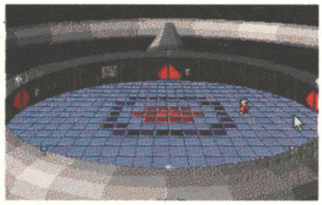
THE BOTTOM LINE
Fiercely competitive mix of air hockey and *Speedball* – far better with friends than on your own though.
74 PERCENT

STARFLIGHT

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

If you'd had the chance to attend the initial meeting where all the programmers and people had met to discuss what they were going to put into this game, you wouldn't have had very much to contribute at all really. You see, they did a pretty good job all on their own.

It's a complicated do-I-really-have-to-read-the-manual fantasy space game, though far more of a role player than your standard *Starglider* or *Elite*-style shoot-'em-up-with-a-few-tactical-bits-bolted-on. Here, you don't directly fly your ship via the joystick, but instead spend your time setting destinations and watching a small picture of your craft zooming about in the corner of the screen. Not exactly action packed, and perhaps lacking the variety of an *Elite*, but that doesn't mean it's easy or dull – you do, after all, have to step into the 47th century shoes of the ship's Captain, Navigator, Scientist, Engineer, Doctor and Communicating person all at the same time.



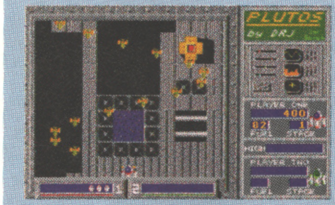
***Starflight*'s fetching options screen.**

The rest of the game is of the usual flying-around-the-universe-trading-and-killing nature, operated via the mouse or by simple single key presses. And it is this straightforwardness in both gameplay and graphics which is the game's high point, despite the initial over-complexity and apparent dullness. It's certainly not a classic, due to the rather restricting gameplay, but it's still a potentially absorbing and value-for-money giving sort of game.• *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A reasonably simple but undeniably vast space exploration type game. Fun, but rather too limiting.
58 PERCENT

NEW BUDGET

Yes, it's true! The Prism Leisure Corporation recently gave expensive-at-all price of £2.99. 'Bloody hell', said the knows is the man who's just played 12 of them — Stuart

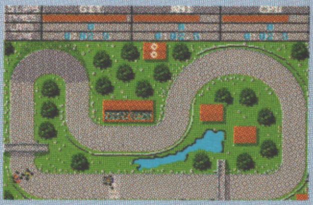


***Plutos* – more fun than *Xenon 2*?**

PLUTOS

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

Plutos is a vertically-scrolling space blast strongly reminiscent of the arcade game *Earth Force*. The graphics are small but atmospheric, and while it's easy to start with, it gets very challenging a few levels in. That's about all there is to say about it really, except that it's very playable and pretty addictive. I really like it, and while it undoubtedly shows its age, the gameplay is timeless. (In fact, in pure gameplay terms, I think this is a better game than the legendary *Xenon 2*). After *Quantox*, *Plutos* is probably the best game in this range, and is well worth getting however much money you've got. – ***67 percent.***

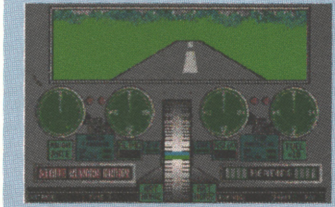


***Karting Grand Prix* – days of chunder.**

KARTING GRAND PRIX

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

Yet another Anco game from yester-year, this *Super Sprint* clone looks not unlike Code Masters' recent *Super Grand Prix* . That's pretty much where the similarity ends though, as this game has neither the wealth of options nor the playability of the Coderoonies' effort. The tracks are too narrow, the control system uncomfortable and illogical, there are unnecessary complications (like choosing your sprocket type before the race!), and the action never really gets going for more than three seconds at a time. – ***30 percent.***

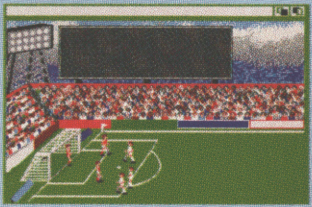


***Flight Path 737* – crashed and burned.**

FLIGHT PATH 737

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

Blimey, this one's going back a bit. Originally released by Anco in 1987 (and on 8-bit before that), *Flight Path* is a flight sim. It's got quite a nice title screen. Um... and that's it. I don't want to sound negative, but I'd never imagined, not in my worst nightmares, that an Amiga game could be this bad. The graphics are...well, words fail me, but I'll try. Totally, utterly, abysmally dreadful just doesn't begin to convey the awfulness of it all. Nope, I can't do it, the words simply haven't been invented yet. I'm sorry, but this game is so bad it's on a whole other plane of reality. If I never have to play it again it'll be four billion lifetimes too soon. I can't tell you any more – I'm going to cry. – ***6 percent.***



***Football Manager* – classic or relic?**

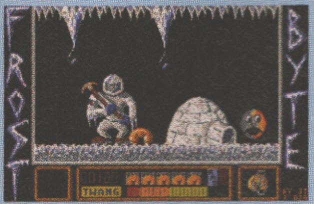
FOOTBALL MANAGER

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

Ah, now we're talking. One of the legends of computer gaming, *Football Manager* has sold hundreds of thousands of copies on every conceivable format, from ZX81 to MSX to Atari ST. A classic strategy game, it's still massively addictive today, though it's been out-featured by practically every other game in the genre since. This Amiga version, sadly, isn't half as good as even the Spectrum one. The match highlights – the game's centre-piece – are unbelievably slow and tedious, and without their hook the gameplay is left looking as slight as it actually is. Dig out your old 8-bit and play it on that instead. – ***19 percent.***

GAMES IN £2.99 SHOCKER!

the software industry a bit of a shock by announcing the release of a range of Amiga games retailing at the not-very-
industry, 'that's a bit of a turn-up for the books. These games must be utter crap.' And are they? The only person who
Campbell. Note that the marking of these games makes little allowance for their price — crap is crap, even at £2.99.

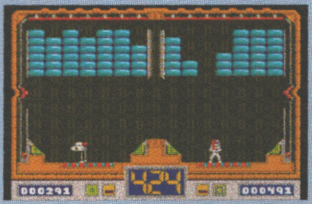


Frost Byte – chill out with a slinky.

FROST BYTE

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

Here's another game that dates back to the 8-bits, a platform arcade adventurey sort of thing that got some very good reviews when it originally came out. It also has the distinction of being probably the only game in which you ever got to play a Slinky (you know, the weird metal spring toy that was popular for five minutes in 1978). It's not a bad game either, pitched at just the right level of toughness to keep you coming back for more while being different enough to be fairly interesting. The graphics are no better than the 8-bit version, but it's well worth a look all the same. ***– 57 percent.***

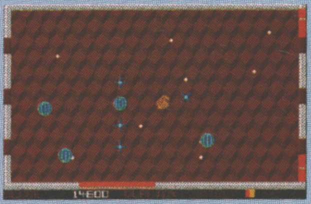


Hotshot – original, but unplayable.

HOTSHOT

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

This strange-looking game was the recipient of some considerable hype when it first saw the light of day in 1988. A bizarre mix of pinball and *Breakout,* it's initially very confusing in play, and even after a goodly number of games I'm still not really comfortable with the seemingly arbitrary control system. Play is slow and disjointed, and while the two-player competitive mode adds an element of...er, competition, even that's not very enthralling. *Hotshot* is certainly novel (unlike most of the games in this batch from Prism), but unfortunately it's also very boring. ***– 34 percent.***

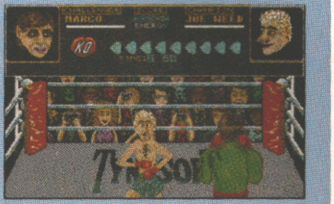


Quantox – mindless (but rather good).

QUANTOX

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

The screenshots on the packaging of this one sent expectations plummeting, but without foundation, as it actually turned out to be rather good. *Quantox* is a dead simple shoot-'em-up game with Jeff Minter overtones, but it's fast, smooth, slick and pretty, and it kept me entranced for ages. Lots of little bonus games stop it from getting repetitive, and even the power-ups have a touch of imagination about them. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that this is one of the most original blasters I've seen in a long time. This has to represent, then, something of a major bargain. ***– 75 percent.***

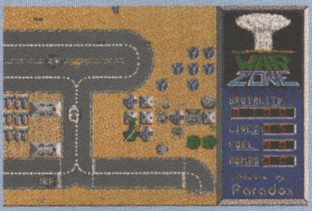


Seconds Out – The Incredible Hulk?

SECONDS OUT

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

If you remember the arcade game *Punch-Out*, or the 8-bit clone *Frank Bruno's Boxing*, then you'll be instantly familiar with this Tynesoft thumperama. It's a fairly standard boxing game, in which your character is transparent, enabling you to see the other boxer and hopefully clobber him senseless. It's a game that's immediately limited by it's choice of subject material, but it's not too badly done at all for what it is. The main drawback is that it turns into something of a guessing game quite quickly, and hence little skill is involved. Still, reasonable mindless violence at the price. ***– 39 percent.***

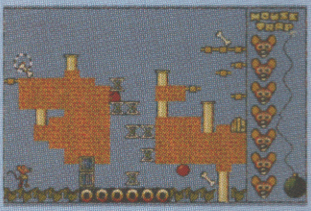


Warzone – for insomniacs everywhere.

WARZONE

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

A strange mix of two game styles again, this one is a cross between *Ikari Warriors* and *Scramble.* You control a little armoured car which moves up a constantly-scrolling screen, trying to shoot baddies and avoid being trapped against walls and crushed. It's not exactly fast-moving, and the graphics seem for the most part to consist of yellow desert-scapes with not very much happening in them. It suffers from poor control response and chronically unimaginative game design too, and while *Warzone* certainly isn't the worst game in this batch, it's a long way short of being the best. What does that make it in terms of Amiga software in 1991? Pretty crap, I'm afraid. ***– 24 percent.***

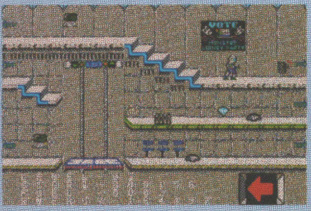


Mousetrap – old-fashioned fun.

MOUSETRAP

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

This is better. *Mouse Trap* has been around for donkey's years since it's original release by MicroValue (back in 1987, to be exact), and it remains now what it was then, a fun little game. It's a platform game very much in the tradition of *Manic Miner*, and it's simple to play but tough to beat. The graphics are pretty primitive but in a charming kind of way, and while the music is appalling it somehow seems to fit in quite nicely. You get dozens of screens for your money, and they're all pretty challenging, so there's enough fun in here to keep you playing for at least a good few hours. Technically I must admit it's useless, but who gives a monkey's about things like that anyway? ***– 60 percent.***

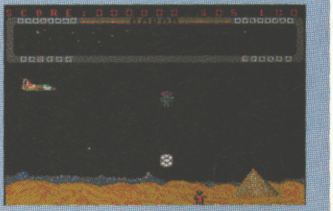


Space Station – mission implausible.

SPACE STATION

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

Old-fashioned platform arcade adventures aren't really something you see much of nowadays (probably because they're old-fashioned), but when you get a good one it can really knock the socks off almost anything else. A pity, then, that *Space Station* is only average. But – hey! – there are a lot worse things to be than average, (as much of the Prism collection shows!) The only really remarkable thing about *Space Station* is the sound, which is absolutely hideous, but otherwise those of you with a low thrills-threshold will find it engrossing for quite a while, or at least engrossing enough to make you forget how bad it looks and sounds. Not bad value for money at all, really. ***– 44 percent.***



Protector – dire, dull, *Defender* game.

PROTECTOR

Publisher: Prism
Release: Out now

On looking at the packaging for this 1986 (1986!) game, you could easily be forgiven for thinking it's some sort of reasonable-looking *Defender* clone. You'd be mistaken though, as it is in fact the worst *Defender* clone it's been my misfortune to stumble across. It features shamefully garish graphics, the most laughable attempt at simulating *Defender*'s inertial movement system I've ever seen, totally ridiculous gameplay mechanics (like the homing missiles which are completely unavoidable unless you take your craft to the very bottom of the screen, whereupon they harmlessly and inexplicably self-destruct), and, and... Look, just don't buy it, okay? ***– 6 percent.***

Both newly re-released on budget, we've pitted *Kick Off* against *Gary Lineker's Hot-Shot*.

IT'S A GAME OF TWO HALVES, BRIAN.

This month sees the re-release of two overhead-view football games, one being possibly the most popular Amiga sports sim ever (at least, it was until the release of its sequel *Kick Off 2*) the other one being, erm, *Gary Lineker's Hot-Shot*. The former, Anco's legendary *Kick Off*, comes complete with the Extra Time expansion disk initially released as an optional add-on, and retails at £7.99 on the Top Shots label. *Hot-Shot* was originally released by Gremlin in a quiet sort of way, and now comes courtesy of USG's Kixx label, also selling for £7.99. We put them up against each other for a head-to-head comparison, but it's not the foregone conclusion you might expect it to be. You see, the referee for this particular grudge match is Stuart Campbell, quite possibly the only person in the Northern Hemisphere to think that *Kick Off 2* is a big pile of donkey's doings, and a man taking a look at that game's predecessor for the first time. (Mind you, he doesn't like Gary Lineker much either...)

Kick Off 2 – utter guff or what? It has to be the all-time Emperor's New Clothes of Amiga software, a near-unplayable game almost exactly the same as the one before it, selling for £20 and upwards. I loathed it, and I wasn't expecting to like its equally popular parent one little bit. Always ready to be persuaded though, I loaded these two games up and ran a series of comparisons in two major areas – program quality and game realism. Within these are certain sub-categories, but they're pretty self-explanatory, so let's get on with it...

PROGRAMMING

GRAPHICS

Well, it's a hands-down victory for *Kick Off* here. It looks absolutely gorgeous – you couldn't ask for an Amiga football game to look better than this. *Hot-Shot* is crude by comparison, dully-coloured with the unrealistic pitch stripes and the penalty spot disappearing during play.

Kick Off - 9 Hot-Shot - 5

SOUND

Kick Off comes up trumps again, although neither game particularly impresses. Anco's game has significantly superior crowd noise, and in *Hot-Shot* there's an uncomfortably long pause between scoring a goal and the crowd cheering it.

Kick Off - 7 Hot-Shot - 4

SPEED

No contest here either. *Kick Off* is Carl Lewis where *Hot-Shot* is Lewis Carroll. *Hot-Shot* isn't actually all that slow in its own right, but it simply can't compete with *Kick Off*.

Kick Off - 8 Hot-Shot - 6

PLAYABILITY

A bit of a comeback for *Hot-Shot* and no mistake. Even after many hours of playing *Kick Off*, I still find myself having very little feeling of control. The ball whizzes around in seemingly random directions, and many brilliant attacking positions collapsed as the ball shot off into the stands of its own accord. I also put in a few scything tackles that were actually attempts to trap the ball. *Hot-Shot* uses the altogether friendlier ball-sticks-to-feet system, which is less sophisticated but a lot more practical.

Kick Off - 5 Hot-Shot - 8

FEATURES

You'd expect that coming with all the features of an expansion disk, *Kick Off* would come out tops here, and that's exactly the case. You can vary the pitch type, the skill of the opposition, your team's tactics and some of the ball's travelling properties. On the other hand, *Hot-Shot* does allow you to change your team's strip colour and name, which is good as it's a bit dull being called 'Joystick 1' all the time in *Kick Off*. Then again, *Kick Off* does let you change ends at half-time, whereas in *Hot-Shot* you have to shoot down the screen (unnatural and uncomfortable) in *both* halves. Sadly, neither game includes an action replay, so marks off all round.

Kick Off - 8 Hot-Shot - 6

GAME

RUNNING

Running with the ball in *Kick Off* is practically impossible. In *Hot-Shot* it's easy and realistic (you go slower with the ball than without), and so superior.

Kick Off - 3 Hot-Shot - 8

PASSING

Kick Off has a 'radar' scanner showing the position of all players, and a semi-intelligent ball (it always heads in the direction of one of your players), but *Hot-Shot* relies pretty much on luck. In *Kick Off*, though, you very rarely (if ever) have time to look at the scanner, so its usefulness is dubious.

Kick Off - 7 Hot-Shot - 3

TACKLING

This is probably the major gameplay strong point of *Hot-Shot*. Tackling is easy and realistic (you can perpetrate – and be the victim of – some vicious-looking chops which somehow escape the ref's attention, foul your own players, or even take out two opponents with one particularly good slide), fun compared to *Kick Off*'s all-or-nothing approach and all-seeing officials.

Kick Off - 5 Hot-Shot - 9

SHOOTING

Pretty much like passing, but *Hot-Shot* suffers from having a single tactic which more often than not results in a goal (I won't spoil it for you by telling you what it is), whereas *Kick Off*'s drawback is that by the time you get close enough to goal to take a shot, the ball's often totally out of control and heading straight for the arms of the keeper or over the by-line.

Kick Off - 6 Hot-Shot - 5

PENALTIES

Both are dire, I'm afraid. Only *Kick Off* gives you any control over the goalkeeper, but it's rather a token effort. From the kicker's side, *Hot-Shot* is slightly more friendly – as direction control is easier it has much less tendency to blaze the ball right over the crossbar, which *Kick Off* tends to do with annoying regularity.

Kick Off - 4 Hot-Shot - 4

FREE KICKS

Equally hopeless in both games.

Kick Off - 2 Hot-Shot - 2

CORNERS AND THROW-INS

Again, both games take much the same approach and there's not much to choose between them. *Hot-Shot* just wins out by having an on-screen power indicator.

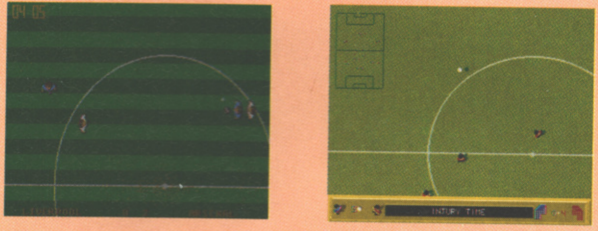
Kick Off - 7 Hot-Shot - 8

SUMMARY

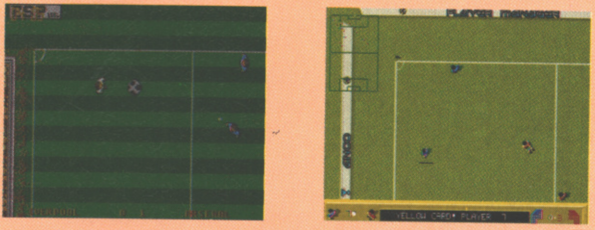
So overall, where does that leave us? The final scores are:

Kick Off - 71 Hot-Shot - 68

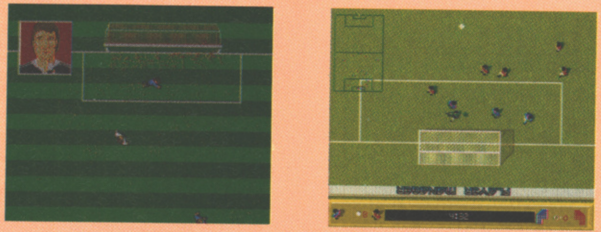
Ruddy heck, that was close. Much to my surprise, *Kick Off* turned out to be superior to its illustrious follow-up (mainly by virtue of it being possible to score now and again), but *Hot-Shot* out-performed its almost non-existent reputation considerably. The real distinction is that *Kick Off* is more like football and *Hot-Shot* is more like an arcade football game, so bear those facts in mind and make your own decision. (Helpful of me, eh?) In fact, at these prices, it might even be worth getting both of them.



Comparing the centre circles, you can see that *Gary Lineker's* is more of a centre ellipse. (And those stripes are a bit on the yucky side, too).

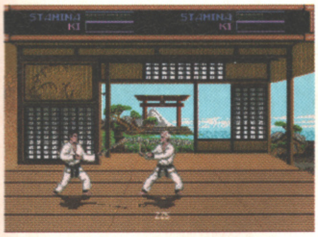


Out at the edges of the pitch, and *Kick Off* seems to be playing behind closed doors. At least in *Gary Lineker's Hot-Shot* there's a crowd to impress.



A goal-mouth scramble in *Gary Lineker* tends to be a one-on-one sort of affair due to the positioning of computer players, but in *Kick Off* it's free-for-all time.

BUDOKAN



Never mind the quality, feel the width.

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Despite the fact that these martial arts things often turn out to be pretty boring and repetitive – *IK+* aside – this one's actually got quite a bit going for it. Not only is there Karate, but also Kendo (wacking each other with sticks), Bo (prodding each other with sticks) and Nunchaku, my personal fave, which uses a whip thing too.

The first thing you have to do is Jiyu-renshu, which (although I'm positive I enjoyed it once with fried rice) actually means practice your fighting skills a bit against an imaginary opponent. Not a bad idea seeing as there are over thirty different moves per art, attained by taking into account whether the fire button has been pressed before, after or while moving the joystick. It's a bit confusing at first, and to be honest I seriously doubt you'll remember them all without the instructions open in front of you.

Hopefully you'll be playing in two-player mode, and your friend will be having exactly the same problem, because the computer opponents are rather less likely to forget what they're meant to be doing.

What else is there to say about the game? Well, the sprites are crisp and well animated and the back drops are pretty, but the action lacks the frantic quality found in the best beat-'em-ups. Personally I'd say that it's all just a bit too serious and complicated to exploit its enjoyment potential to the full, even though it is undoubtedly one of the best games of its type around. • *RICH PELLEY*

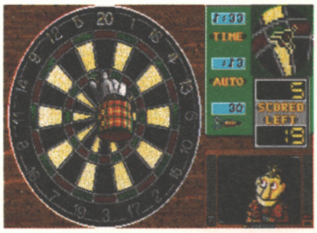
THE BOTTOM LINE

A neat, well presented but far too taxing and monotonous hand-to-hand, stick-to-stick martial arts thingy. **64** PERCENT

WACKY DARTS

Publisher: Code Masters
Price: £6.99
Release: Out now

There are two words in a game title that are guaranteed to strike terror into the heart of a reviewer. Those two words are 'Darts' and 'Wacky', so it looked like there could be a nightmare in store with this recent Codies release. Slightly worried, I took a good stiff drink (both for courage and to get into the spirit of the thing), then plunged in.



Not very wacky, but definitely darts.

What I found was no more and no less than just another computer darts game with a wobbly-hand cursor control system, its main claim to fame being the pretty feeble humour that's been tacked onto it (your opponents are a selection of bizarre characters who throw things other than darts at the board – the Rambo-like character, for example, fires a bazooka at it) and an option for up to eight players at a time. Wow.

Actually, I'm not being entirely accurate about the control system, as it also uses an unnecessarily complicated trajectory feature which makes it significantly harder to hit your chosen target than usual – though admittedly only on certain numbers. I'm finding it pretty difficult to write anything interesting about the game at all, actually. This is a perfectly adequate computer darts sim, but it's about as wacky as Prince Edward. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

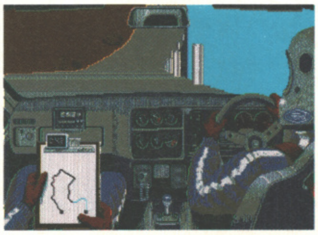
THE BOTTOM LINE

That old reviewer's stand-by, 'Perhaps a good game for the younger player'. If you like computer darts it's fine, but unremarkable (and too easy). **50** PERCENT

LOMBARD RAC RALLY

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This is a driving game with a difference – the idea here isn't to hurtle around at dangerous speeds and beat hundreds of other cars. In *Lombard RAC Rally*, your main opponent is the clock, and belting around with your metaphorical foot to the metaphorical floor is liable to result in you zooming off the edge of a metaphorical mountain track and smashing your car to metaphorical bits. The game looks not unlike Accolade's *Test Drive* series, and moves swiftly with a genuine sense of lurching stomach as you plunge into road dips, bounce over blind hills, and career uncontrollably into large and solid trees when doing the forest run in the fog. There are ample opportunities to sharpen up your driving skills in practice stages before trying the full rally, (although you can pretty much jump straight in if you prefer) and a goodly number of different scenarios and driving conditions to keep you interested. Bad points? The map carried by your co-driver is a bit useless, the collision detection is a touch iffy, and it does eventually get just a little bit repetitive (there are an awful lot of roads to drive along, but most of them look much the same) but that's about all. For a game that's essentially a simulation, *Lombard RAC Rally* is more fun than it really ought to be, and at this price you can't really go wrong. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



Another *Lombard RAC* cliff-hanger.

THE BOTTOM LINE

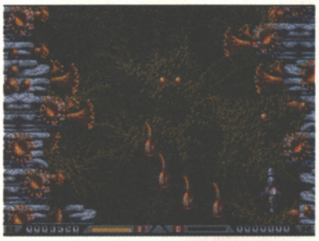
Possibly a minority interest, but if you think you can handle some repetitiveness, well worth a shot. **70** PERCENT

XENON 2

Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £10.99
Release: Out now

There are things to be said against *Xenon 2*, of course. Collision detection sometimes seems a little wobbly (to say the least), and the gameplay doesn't really vary very much (vertical scrollers never give you all that much room to move at the best of times) but these objections are thoroughly trounced by the simple experience of it. It's not often that computer game graphics have been so thoroughly arcade-like (indeed *Xenon 2* even out-arcades actual coin-op licenses), it's hard to think of another game that's bolted quite so many weapons onto a single space ship and never has music added quite so much to a game (the game is almost worth it just for the sound alone). Make no mistake – *Xenon 2* at £10.99 has to be one of the bargains, if not *the* bargain of the year.

So what makes it so good? Well, the presentation is lovely (that Assault On Precinct 13 tune by Bomb The Bass, the gorgeous shop sequence, the film-like credits), the gameplay itself is competent verging on the clever (but never really any better than that), but you can't get away from the fact that it's the graphics that carry it off. Just look at the screenshot below (arcade or Amiga, who can tell?). Then buy it – it'll be worth the money, if only to impress your friends. • *MATT BIELBY*



(Almost) everybody's favourite, *Xenon 2*.

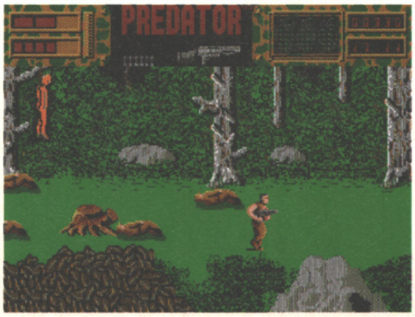
THE BOTTOM LINE

An audio-visual banquet hung around the skeleton of a fairly ordinary (but pretty tough) vertically scrolling blaster. Still one of the most impressive Amiga games around in terms of sheer, well, impressiveness. **82** PERCENT

PREDATOR

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Another timely re-release, this game follows hard on the heels of *Predator 2* from Activision, reviewed in the last issue (where it collected an unimpressive 53% from Gary). It's as simple as its sequel, being a very straightforward horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up, distinguished only by some excellently atmospheric sound. The game itself lacks action, consisting for the main part of trogging uneventfully through the jungle, occasionally being hit by a string of bullets from off-screen, and having to shoot a few soldiers now and again (for reasons curiously unexplained by the plot, which distinctly implies that the soldiers were your buddies, but that they're all dead now). Sometimes the screen will change colour and a little triangle will appear and move around a bit, and you'll have to avoid it for five seconds or so. This is the eponymous Predator's main role in the game (the triangle is his gun sight), and if you were thinking that might make the game feel a bit light on confrontational tension, you'd be right. The jungle maze bit of *Platoon* (now also on The Hit Squad label) works in a very similar way, and (as well as actually being better at doing much the same thing) it's just one of several varied sections, which makes *Platoon* a much better buy at the same price. Get that instead. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



Old Arnie trudges through the jungle, avoiding the Predator and searching for a better game.

THE BOTTOM LINE

High in atmosphere, but sadly lacking in gameplay. Slow, unexciting, and generally quite dull. **45** PERCENT

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PD

Public Domain, to get straight to the point, is free software. That doesn't mean it's crap though – in fact, it can often prove a lot more fun to play than the stuff you pay for! And there's a lot of it about too. Your guide to the best, Mr Stuart Campbell...

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

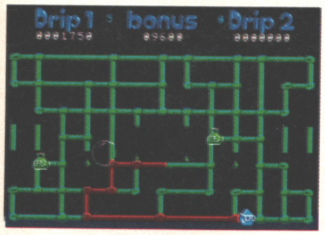
Free software, eh? How can that possibly work then? The answer is surprisingly simple. It usually consists of games or utilities not quite up to commercial quality – often nowhere near commercial quality, and not really intended to be either – so PD programmers make their stuff freely available to anyone who wants it, usually through PD 'libraries'. The libraries aren't allowed to charge for the actual software, but can take a fee for the cost of the disk, the cost of duplication, and their time. This fee varies from library to library, but is usually somewhere between 99p and £3. Most of the games in this review are available from various places, on various disks (much of the time PD comes on compilation disks with several games per disk), and at various prices, so shop around for the deal that suits you best. The addresses given are where we happened to get our own copies from.

And that's it really. The nice thing about PD games – and there are literally hundreds of them, we've just picked some of our favourites – is that while they may be graphically awful, the gameplay is often gorgeously simple and enjoyable to play. That's right, they're the exact polar opposite of many full price games...

DRIP

VIRUS FREE PD (disk Games Galore Vol. 1)

This comes on a disk packed with good stuff, including a superb *Space Invaders* clone and a good version of Amiga Power's All-Time Top 100 game *Shanghai*. *Drip* is the star of the show, though, a near-professional quality arcade thing based on the old *Painter* games of yore. The idea is simple and not a million miles away from *Pacman* – you race around a maze of pipes chased by a couple of baddies, all the while trying to colour in all the pipes without getting splatted. There are occasional power-ups that allow you to chase the baddies or make yourself invincible, and a few other little surprise extras, but basically it's as complicated as breathing. The game is great fun, but the most striking aspect is just how lovingly it's been put together. It's packed with little details and high-quality presentation, and certainly as a budget game at least would be well worth blowing a few quid on. The fact that you can get it for next to nothing (and with several other good games thrown in) makes it a bargain you'd have to be clinically insane to pass up.



***Drip*-ping (ahem) with classic gameplay.**

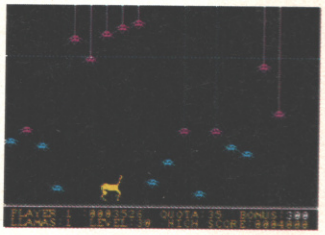
VERDICT: Buy it now, or check straight in to the Mavis Riley Home For The Debilitatingly Bewildered. ★★★★★

METAGALACTIC LLAMAS

VIRUS FREE PD (disk 843)

Fed up with the state of the art? Bored silly with multiple-disk games with staggering animation, sampled sound, and graphics taken straight from the arcades? No? Well, this isn't the game for you, so I wouldn't bother reading the rest of this review. *Metagalactic Llamas* is, wait for it, a conversion of an original VIC-20 game by Jeff Minter from 5 or 6 years ago. It was a pretty original kind of shoot-'em-up in its day, a single screen affair where you zapped lots of spiders by hitting them with llama spit (!), reflected off a barrier which you could move up and down while your llama ran left and right along the bottom. It was a strange but interesting system, and made for a novel and challenging game at the time, and nothing's really changed today. And I do mean nothing, not the graphics, not the sound, not...

While a properly souped-up 1991 version of this game might have been a good idea, this is still fun as it stands – if you were a VIC-20 owner it'll take you pleasurably back in time for a few hours.



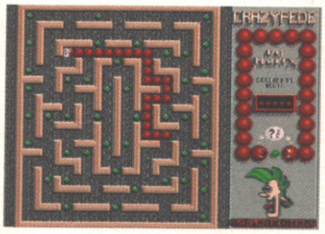
Erm, well it might not *look* like much...

VERDICT: A bit of a laugh really – fun for nostalgic reasons, but actually a nice game into the bargain. ★★★

CRAZYPEDE

SOFTViLLE (disk UGAMES3)

Okay, so who remembers '*Snake*'? One of the very very earliest computer games, it involved you controlling a snake (so no surprises there) which slithered around the screen eating food. Every time it ate a piece of food, its tail grew longer, and if it crashed into its tail it died. The snake's other characteristic was that it just couldn't stop moving. In this totally strange game, *Snake* has been crossed with *Pacman* to produce one of the most frustratingly addictive games I've seen all month. You control the snake by rotating it with the mouse buttons, and it speeds off as soon as there's a space in front of it. You'll need incredible concentration and reaction speeds to complete even the easiest of the game's four levels, and with another 3 respectable games on the disk, this is another practically-free bargain-and-a-half.



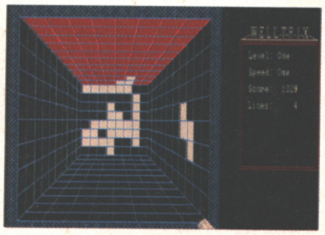
Yes, we know how primitive it looks.

VERDICT: A novel mix of game styles results in a brilliant game that had me glued to the screen for ages. ★★★★

WELLTRIX

VIRUS FREE PD (disk Games Galore Vol. 2)

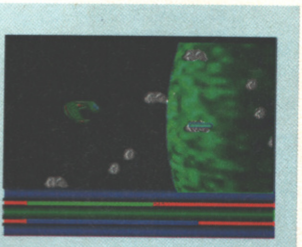
Moving right back to the present day, *Welltrix* is a version of the recently-released *Tetris* sequel *Welltris*, and except for the background pictures, it looks and plays exactly the same. Astonishingly enough, it's like *Tetris* but played in a well, where there are four sides that the pieces can fall down instead of *Tetris*' one. The pieces can be rotated, moved around the walls and dropped to the bottom using the cursor keys – it's a touch awkward but not too much of a flaw. The game is pretty easy to get to grips with, and though not quite as sublimely addictive as its predecessor, it'll keep you entertained for many an hour. Compared to the full-price Infogrames version, this holds up very well indeed, and with several other games on the disk (including a good *Othello*), it's excellent value.



Heavy duty brain bashing in this 3D *Tetris*.

VERDICT: Makes the official version practically redundant. ★★★★

X RATED WARES



Pretty, but sadly dull to play...

Now this is interesting. The game, *X-System*, originally appeared in the office under the banner of EXCLUSIVEWARE and was originally intended to be PD, but when Virus Free PD saw the game, they negotiated a deal with the author whereby they would be the sole distributors of the software, which they would actually *sell*.

Thus it goes out at £3.99 including P&P, with 50% going to the author. The game comes on 2 disks and is very slickly done, using *AMOS*, *DPaint III* and several other professional development tools to produce something which has a distinctly commercial feel to it. Sadly though, it falls into the opposite trap to most PD, being pretty to look at but bereft of any real gameplay. The game itself is rather confusing and boring, and our copy was prone to crashing every time you lost a life. And it needs 1 meg, too. As the intro trumpets, this game certainly isn't PD. And it's right too – it's not that good.

Contact addresses for this month's games:

VIRUS FREE PD, 23 Elborough Road, Moredon, Swindon, Wilts SN2 2LS ☎ 0793 512321
AMIGANUTS UNITED, 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook, Southampton SO1 6QX ☎ 0703 785680
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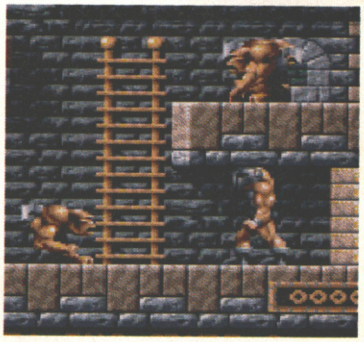

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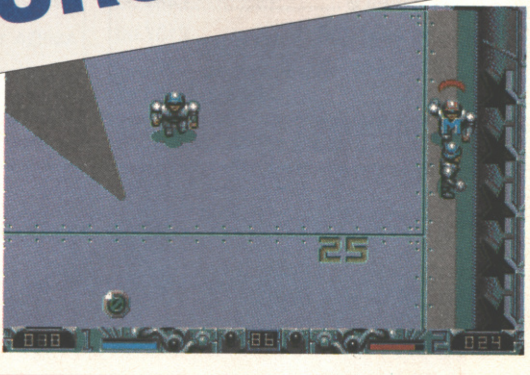

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AMIGA POWER / US GOLD CRUISE FOR A CORPSE COMPETITION

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Cruise For A Corpse, the latest Delphine adventure using the revolutionary 'Cinematique' pull-down menu system first seen in *Future Wars* and *Operation Stealth*, is due soon and will be reviewed next issue. Seeing as both its parents were Amiga Power All-time Top 100 titles – and early reports have it that this new game is the best of the lot – it seemed like perfect timing for a *Cruise For A Corpse* preview compo thingy, especially when US Gold (who market Delphine products in the UK) were willing to stump up for an extremely topical £600 Commodore CDTV!

So what's a CDTV anyway?

You know already, you clot! After all, you have read the three-page feature we've run on it earlier in the mag, haven't you? What? You haven't? Well rush off back there this instant (it's on page 52) and only come back when you've finished.

Right. The CDTV. It's a very posh looking 1 meg Amiga, lacking a keyboard, attached to a CD player, and cloaked by a) a Video Recorder-style black case and b) a multi-million pound ad campaign trying to tell you that whatever it is, it *isn't* a computer.

It's also quite possibly the most desirable, street (ahem) 'cred' piece of 'kit' it's possible to own at the moment, and as such an ideal competition prize, wouldn't you say? (It'll even run CDs of Delphine's earlier Cinematique effort *Future Wars*, but that's by the by). Almost as desirable and street cred (but not quite) are the ten copies of classic board game Cluedo we've got for the runners up. Not unlike *Cruise* in design (well, they're both period Agatha Christie-esque murder mysteries, anyway) it's the ideal way for family or friends to while away those long summer afternoons.

So what do I have to do?

It's simple. Here's a little* Cruise For A Corpse*-style scenario – we want you to complete it and tell us who the murder was. The winner will be the person who comes up with the, ahem, wittiest and most convincing explanation. Anyway, the scenario:

Gary Penn is found dead in the Amiga Power offices by the cleaner when he comes around at five o'clock one afternoon. There is no visible murder weapon, and his corpse appears unmarked. Equally, none of the rest of the Amiga Power team are to be found. It's not surprising that Matt Bielby isn't around – he was meant to be out of the office for the day visiting (of all people) US Gold, though suspiciously they say he never turned up – and the other Matt (Matt Williams, the art assistant) has taken the day off at short notice, but the rest of the staff should be there (and aren't). Even odder, the two ad sales girlies, Alison and Susanne, have disappeared too. About ten minutes after the cleaner discovers the body, Mark Ramshaw wanders in claiming he's just come back from a dental appointment, and before he left (around an hour beforehand) everyone had been at their desks and working normally. He has no explanation for what happened to Mr Penn.

You are called in by the local constabulary to uncover the mystery – who killed Gary Penn?

What could be easier, eh? Simply jot down your explanation (legibly please!) and send it off to: **Who killed Gary Penn? Competition, Amiga Power, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW**. Don't forget to add your name and address, and make sure your entry arrives by the closing date of July 31st 1991.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- The closing date for this competition is July 31st 1991. Entries received after that will be cruising for a binning.
- On all matters relating to this competition the editor's decision is final.
- Employees of Future Publishing, US Gold and relatives of the deceased are not eligible to enter this competition.

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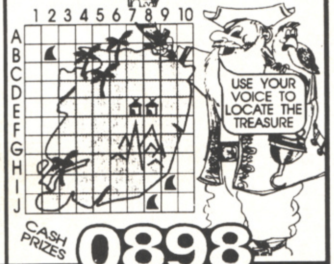

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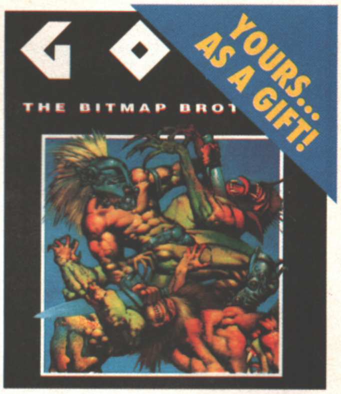

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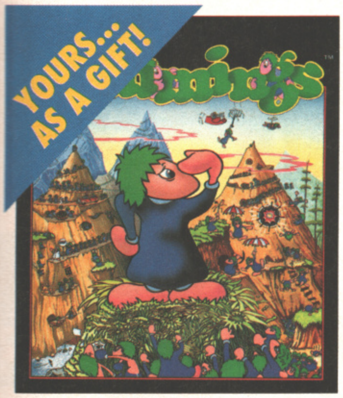

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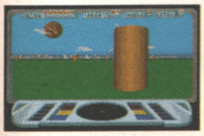
ALPHA WAVES
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Nice 3D bouncing romp. Bizarre, but endearing. ***Downers*** – It tends to feel like an executive toy, and a very expensive one at that. ***The Bottom Line*** – A novel diversion but no great shakes. ★★

THE AMAZING SPIDERMAN
Empire £24.99

Uppers – Old fashioned platform gameplay still holds up well. ***Downers*** – Tiny sprites and – let's face it – it all looks rather crap when you first see it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun, but do you really want to fork out 25 quid for what's basically a crumbly old 8-bit game? ★★

AMIGA ENCOUNTER
Novagen £20.42



Uppers – Very fast and atmospheric. ***Downers*** – It's just *Battlezone* yet again. Incredibly thin gameplay for a full-price 16-bitter. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good old-fashioned zooming' n' blasting fun, but it really should have been a budget game. ★★★

ANTAGO
Art Of Dreams £19.95

Uppers – Cute and charming little *Othello/Checkers* hybrid. ***Downers*** – A bit twee; not much lasting interest. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only really comes alive in two player mode. ★

ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Lots of tanks, lots of planes, lots of places to go. It's deep and wide and tall (and good-looking to boot). ***Downers*** – Takes a lot of self-discipline to play properly. ***The Bottom Line*** – A natural successor to *Carrier Command*, and – it has to be said – a worthy one too. ★★★★

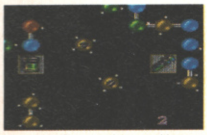
ATF II
Digital Integration £24.99

Uppers – Good old-fashioned 3D fly-and-shoot game. ***Downers*** – It's no flight sim. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun as far as it goes. ★★

ATOMIC ROBOKID
Activision £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of levels, plenty of action. ***Downers*** – Not particularly fast (and certainly not new!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Reasonable straightforward shoot-'em-up in the 'son of *R-Type*' vein. ★★

ATOMINO
Psygnosis £25.99



Uppers – Easy to pick up, with thousands of levels to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Can covalent bonding be fun? We're not sure. Rather samey; very tough; crap music. ***The Bottom Line*** – Similar to *Pipe Mania* in some ways – if you liked that, try this. ★★★

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Variety, neat animation, some decent jokes. ***Downers*** – But film licences nearly always feel too thin to be worth 25 quid... ***The Bottom Line*** – ...and this one's no different. Fun but slight. ★★★

BADLANDS
Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – A close conversion... ***Downers*** – ...of a crap overhead-view arcade race game. ***The Bottom Line*** – So workmanlike its jeans hang over its arse. ★★

THE BALL GAME
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Based on the excellent but un-released *Infection* puzzle game. ***Downers*** – The concept is spoiled by senseless changes to the rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting, but ineptly executed. ★★

THE BARD'S TALE III – THIEF OF FATE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A satisfying bout of monster bashing to appeal to the usual *Bard's Tale* mob. ***Downers*** – New ideas and fancy programming are sadly lacking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Monumentally unspectacular, but kinda nice all the same. One for the hardened D&D freak. ★★★

B.A.T.
Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – Intergalactic intrigue in a novel interactive comic book style. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little too left-of-centre for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very different, and actually very good. ★★★

BATTLE COMMAND
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Loads of missions, atmospheric solid 3D graphics (ie lots of green), plus a good mix of strategy and blasting. ***Downers*** – Takes a while to get into; some odd (and impossible to complete) missions. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the self-discipline to persevere past an uninspiring start, this is a worthy follow-up to the classic *Carrier Command*. ★★★

BATTLEMASTER
PSS £29.99

Uppers – A tired fantasy/strategy plot given new lease of life by excellent graphics and oodles of playability. ***Downers*** – Arcade junkies need not apply, despite the abundance of genocidal mayhem. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try it – you may be surprised. ★★★

BETRAYAL
Rainbird £29.99

Uppers – Fantasy blended with strategy and some nice graphical touches offers an intriguing hybrid. ***Downers*** – The game really needs several human players to make it exciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Rainbird attempt something a little bit different. ★★★

BLOCK OUT
Rainbow Arts £19.99

Uppers – Initially similar to *Welltris*, but far more challenging due to the true use of 3D. ***Downers*** – If *Tetris* (and its ilk) made you scream, playing *Block Out* is not medically advisable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Compulsive. ★★★

BOTICS
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Nice sound; futuristic graphics. ***Downers*** – Absolutely dire *Pong*-style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Get out of here! ★

BRAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Very pretty, very smooth, very challenging. ***Downers*** – ...and very, very irritating indeed, especially if you hate the central character. ***The Bottom Line*** – Okay if you play it with the sound off. ★★★

BREACH 2
Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Stick with it and you'll find an immensely rewarding space/strategy blast with loads of levels. ***Downers*** – Scrappy graphics and some awkward quirks will deter many. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loved *Laser Squad*? Then you'll probably take a shine to *Breach 2*. ★★

CABAL
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly enjoyable *Operation Wolf* varient. ***Downers*** – Kindergarten graphics and no game depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Reasonable two-player blasting for an hour or three.★★

CADAVER
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeously atmospheric graphics; a good mix of puzzling and hacking. ***Downers*** – One or two irritating moments and it's all a bit lacking in the excitement department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice blend of 3D graphics and adventuring (but it's not a classic). ★★★

CAPTIVE
Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Neat icon-control system enhances an atmospheric (and massive) exploration challenge. ***Downers*** – The game system is quite similar to *Dungeon Master*, so joystick freaks won't find much to enjoy here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A genuine Amiga classic. ★★★★

CARTHAGE
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Excellent graphics and some nifty arcade sequences. ***Downers*** – But underneath it's a distinctly average strategy game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite appearances, not one for the joystick junkies out there. ★★★

CAR-VUP
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – As cute a game as you are ever likely to find, and with a perfectly balanced difficulty level too. ***Downers*** – It's pretty simple – more variety between the levels would've been nice. ***The Bottom Line*** – It might not push back the boundaries of Amiga leisure software, but it's a damn fine game. ★★★★

CENTURION
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Fairly interesting management sections with some nifty battle sequences. ***Downers*** – Two appalling arcade sections blow its chances. ***The Bottom Line*** – Un-balanced. ★★

CHAOS STRIKES BACK
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Complex and ingenious puzzles; very user friendly; great sound. ***Downers*** – Slightly old fashioned looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing role playing adventure using the *Dungeon Master* game system. ★★★★

CHASE HQ II
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well, it's not as disastrous as the first conversion. ***Downers*** – But still terminally average. It drives like a brick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It looks as tired as Miami Vice. ★★

CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – Heaps of character with some innovation in the gameplay for once. ***Downers*** – A touch shallow and a touch easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga's very best. ★★★★

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A veritable air force of planes to fly, with piles of options, missions and external views. ***Downers*** – A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and naff perspective put the dampers on the whole affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Low flying flight sim – fails to stay with the competition. ★★★

CHIP'S CHALLENGE
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of levels;

Just how do you tell an astounding piece of must-buy software from a hopeless lump of junk? With The Bottom Line, of course – Amiga Power's utterly indispensable guide to every significant full price game released over the past year or so. Every issue it's out with the old and in with the new, as we throw out a sizeable handful of the oldest and crappest games and add the cream (and in some cases the sour milk) of the previous month. There are games here you simply can't live without (check out new entry *The Secret Of Monkey Island*, for instance) and ones you'd be foolish to find house room for – now you'll have no problem telling the difference.

THE BOTTOM LINE

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

typically well thought out console-style gameplay. ***Downers –*** Simplistic graphics; lack of depth. ***The Bottom Line –*** Good, but not the most characterful of puzzle games. ★★★

CODENAME: ICEMAN
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Good if you've always fancied a submarine simulator bolted onto Sierra's usual graphic adventure engine. ***Downers –*** Five disks of slow-motion action. ***The Bottom Line –*** Not Sierra's best, and a poor introduction to their game style. ★★

THE COLONEL'S BEQUEST
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Mildly intriguing whodunit, with that ever so familiar Sierra style of presentation. ***Downers –*** Terrible graphics, hours of tedium. ***The Bottom Line –*** Overpriced and over here. ★★

COMBO RACER
Gremlin £19.99

Uppers – Ultra-fast 3D and a track designer up the longevity of the game. ***Downers –*** Naff sound and a totally ridiculous two-player option. ***The Bottom Line –*** Lacks sparkle, but it's far from being a disaster. ★★

COMMANDO
Elite £19.99

Uppers – Lovingly recreated coin-op blast-'em scroller. ***Downers –*** As fashionable as an anorak. ***The Bottom Line –*** Classic stuff. ★★★

CRIME WAVE
US Gold £24.95

Uppers – Gore galore; the numerous video interludes spice it up a bit. ***Downers –*** The actual game is dull in the extreme, and the waiting between levels is monstrous. ***The Bottom Line –*** A bog-standard blast-'em-up with knobs on. ★

CYBERCON III
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant sense of 'being there', and better Freescape than Freescape. ***Downers –*** Predictably, not all that accessible to your average game player. ***The Bottom Line –*** Well worth the effort of getting into. ★★★★★

DAMOCLES
Novagen £24.99

Uppers – Excellent use of solid 3D graphics to depict a play area spanning a whole solar system. ***Downers –*** The exploration and puzzle solving concept has already been used extensively in *Mercenary* et al. ***The Bottom Line –*** *Mercenary* with filled-in graphics – Paul Woakes fans will play it for months. ★★★

DAS BOOT
Mindscape £29.99

Uppers – The most accessible sub sim to date. ***Downers –*** ...but that still doesn't make it particularly accessible. ***The Bottom Line –*** Playable, but overpriced. The best in its field. ★★★

DEATH TRAP
Anco £24.99

Uppers – Unusual mix of horizontally-scrolling arcade adventure and magic. ***Downers –*** Naff scrolling and poor sound mar the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line –*** A refreshingly playable game. ★★

DEFENDER II
ARC £24.99

Uppers – *Defender*, *Defender II* and *Stargate* all in one package – the action never lets up. ***Downers –*** Only purists will appreciate the archaic graphics, one or two essential features are omitted, and the *Defender II* game is duff. ***The Bottom Line –*** Don't judge it by appearances alone – every home should have one. ★★★★

DISC
Loriciel £24.99

Uppers – A few nice graphical touches. ***Downers –*** Appallingly-designed gameplay with very little actual action. ***The Bottom Line –*** A crappy *Discs Of Tron* rip-off without most of the original's good features. ★

DISTANT ARMIES
Exocet £24.99

Uppers – Ten different variations of chess, all in one package. Nice graphics, tons of background information. ***Downers –*** Definitely for chess-heads only. ***The Bottom Line –*** The ideal present for the cerebral Amiga owner. ★★★

DRAGON BREED
Activision £24.99

Uppers – A near perfect arcade conversion; niftily animated main dragon sprite. ***Downers –*** The zillionth sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up of last year. ***The Bottom Line –*** One instinctively knows when a conversion is right. ★★★★

DRAGONFLIGHT
Thalion £34.99

Uppers – Elegantly designed, perfectly executed fantasy RPG. ***Downers –*** If only it wasn't such a tired old genre. ***The Bottom Line –*** Over-priced, unspectacular, but (let's be fair) still reasonable fun. ★★★

DRAGONS OF FLAME
SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Almost instant playability – not something you'd expect from a role playing game. ***Downers –*** A bit simplistic for real Dungeons & Dragons fans. ***The Bottom Line –*** An excellent introduction to the new bread of fantasy RPGs. ★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR II
Readysoft £44.95

Uppers – Really incredibly gorgeous cartoon graphics. ***Downers –*** Minimal player interaction and a ridiculous price tag. ***The Bottom Line –*** Not the best value game in the world. ★★

DYNASTY WARS
US Gold £19.99

Uppers – A beat-'em-up with horses and distinctly Japanese graphics. Neat. ***Downers –*** Pity about the sound and limited gameplay. ***The Bottom Line –*** A road of clap. ★★

ECO PHANTOMS
Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Atmospheric alien-style graphics and complex, multi-faceted gameplay give it a totally original feel. ***Downers –*** Despite the plot and shiny exterior it lacks excitement. ***The Bottom Line –*** Different, but not a vital game by any means. ★★★

EDD THE DUCK
Impulze £24.99

Uppers – *Rainbow Islands*-inspired gameplay ensures some level of interest. ***Downers –*** But the whole thing just doesn't inspire, and the difficulty is placed too high for a young audience. ***The Bottom Line –*** Your granny might buy you one. ★★

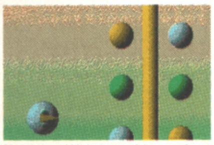
ELVIRA – MISTRESS OF THE DARK
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Elvira's gorgeous; the graphics really draw the player in. ***Downers –*** Pity the game itself is nigh on impossible – and it takes five disks! ***The Bottom Line –*** Falls apart due to gratuitous disk swapping and infuriating gameplay. ★★

EMLYN HUGHES' ARCADE QUIZ
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Just like a pub quiz machine... ***Downers –*** ...but with Emlyn Hughes in it (and no real cash prizes). ***The Bottom Line –*** Oh dear. ★

E-MOTION
US Gold £19.99



Uppers – Weird graphics and mindboggling gameplay set *E-Motion* apart from just about any other game. ***Downers –*** The whole concept may prove difficult to get your mind around. ***The Bottom Line –*** If you can handle the basic idea *E-Motion* offers many joyous hours of swearing and frustration. ★★★★★

ESWAT
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – As conversions go, it's not a complete nightmare... ***Downers –*** ...but let's be honest, the arcade original was duff, duff, duff. ***The Bottom Line –*** A reasonable conversion of a terminally average game. ★

EVERTON FC INTELLIGENCIA
AMFAS £19.95

Uppers – A footie fanatic's dream – a trivia quiz based on our national pastime. ***Downers –*** Haven't I answered that question two thousand times already? ***The Bottom Line –*** Ridiculous title, stupid concept. If you see it, burn it. ★

EXILE
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Real-world physics incorporated into an arcade game; it's more of a true arcade adventure than most games bearing that tag. ***Downers –*** Rather primitive graphics, and not the most instantly playable game ever. ***The Bottom Line –*** A great arcade adventure, but it might not be your cup of tea if you're an action fan. ★★★★★

EXTERMINATOR
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Very original (read 'very, very odd indeed') arcade thing, well converted to retain the original's feel. ***Downers –*** Confusing initially, but once you've played it for a while it's...confusing. ***The Bottom Line –*** Great fun, but it doesn't really make it in the longevity stakes. ★★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
SSI (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Takes *Dungeon Master* a step further. Excellent atmosphere and graphics. ***Downers –*** Despite being better than *DM*, it's not actually very different from it at all. ***The Bottom Line –*** The best D&D game yet for the Amiga. (Or, indeed, for anything else.) ★★★★★

5TH GEAR
Hewson £19.99

Uppers – Erm, it's from Hewson. That's its redeeming feature. ***Downers –*** The game itself is a pretty pointless scrolling driving game (ie it's a disaster). ***The Bottom Line –*** Oh dear. ★

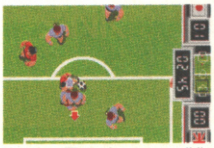
F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Strategy and accuracy combine to bring a fresh edge to an over-populated genre. Hide, strike and run away! ***Downers –*** If you're good it can get dull, as no one knows you're there! ***The Bottom Line –*** Damn fine simulation. ★★★★

FINAL BATTLE
PSS £24.99

Uppers – Nice 3D isometric graphics; a sequel completely unlike its predecessor. ***Downers –*** The game is rendered unplayable by the impenetrable control system. ***The Bottom Line –*** Flawed. ★★

FIGHTING SOCCER
Activision £24.99



Uppers – The coin-op was mildly amusing(ish). ***Downers –*** You are accused of producing an utterly dull game of the lowest calibre. How do you plead? ***The Bottom Line –*** Guilty as hell. ★

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE
MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Excellent *Ghosts 'N' Goblins*-inspired medieval romp, spiced up by the addition of puzzles. ***Downers –*** Not the most original or modern game ever. ***The Bottom Line –*** Neato. ★★★

THE FOOL'S ERRAND
Miles Computing £24.95

Uppers – A puzzle game with real lastability – 80 problems to get your brain aching. ***Downers –*** Underneath the gloss, a fairly average game. ***The Bottom Line –*** Just okay. ★★

FUTURE BASKETBALL
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Fast, violent, exciting and well presented mayhem. ***Downers –*** The poor man's *Speedball 2*. ***The Bottom Line –*** Doesn't have the depth of the Bitmaps' classic, but enormous fun all the same. ★★★

GALAXY FORCE II
Activision £24.99

Uppers – An ambitious attempt at a visually stunning coin-op. ***Downers –*** Everything else. ***The Bottom Line –*** If you know you can't do it why bother trying? ★

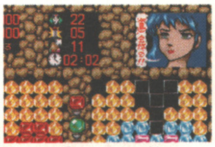
GARFIELD – THE WINTER'S TAIL
The Edge £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant Jim Davis graphics. ***Downers –*** Crappy Steve Davis gameplay. ***The Bottom Line –*** What a wasted licence. For die-hard fans only. ★

GAZZA II
Empire £24.99

Uppers – Gazza doesn't actually appear in the game much. ***Downers –*** Juddering sprites, poor control (just like the man himself), terrible sound – take your pick. ***The Bottom Line –*** It's enough to reduce you to tears. ★

GEM'X
Demonware £24.99



Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mental torture. ***Downers –*** Won't change your mind if you're not into puzzlers. ***The Bottom Line –*** One of the best puzzle games to date.★★★★

GHENGHIS KHAN
Infogrames £39.99

Uppers – Stylish and fairly deep historical strategy game. ***Downers –*** Ridiculously expensive though, and requires a fair dose of manual reading. ***The Bottom Line –*** A bit of a cliché, but 'good if you like that sort of thing.' ★★★

GODS
Renegade £25.53

Uppers – Lovely aesthetics, quite involved for a platform game. ***Downers –*** Not quite as good as it's made out to be. ***The Bottom Line –*** Don't believe the hype, but pretty damn good all the same. ★★★★★

GOLDEN AXE
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Perfect arcade conversion, with every last feature implemented. ***Downers –*** There never really was a lot of variation in the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line –*** Visually stunning, but not different enough to separate it from the usual beat-'em-up. ★★★

THE GOLD OF THE AZTECS
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – The animation gives the hero real character for once, and each screen is a separate challenge. Loads of nice touches. ***Downers –*** The control is a tad awkward until you get used to it. ***The Bottom Line –*** A simpler game than it first appears, but nonetheless a totally absorbing one. ★★★★

GRAND PRIX MASTER
Dinamic £19.95

Uppers – Endorsed by Jorge Martinez (apparently famous on the 80cc motorcycle circuit). ***Downers –*** Handles like a Reliant Robin. ***The Bottom Line –*** Not to put too fine a point on it, useless. ★

GREMLINS II
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Cute as hell, with graphics and sound nigh on perfect. ***Downers –*** It really is far too difficult. ***The Bottom Line –*** A good film licence. ★★★

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Elite £19.99

Uppers – As close a coin-op conversion as you could possibly hope for. ***Downers –*** Mind you, it is a bit on the ancient side. ***The Bottom Line –*** Who cares about modern when a game is this good? ★★★

HAMMERFIST
Vivid Image (Activision) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically adept arcade adventure with tons of playability and plenty to keep you going. ***Downers –*** Iffy sound. ***The Bottom Line –*** Thoroughly enjoyable (if you like that sort of thing). ★★★

HARD DRIVIN' II
Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Refined version of the original – less bugs, a track editor, a neat 'head-to-head' option if you link two machines...

Downers – ...but still glitchy and not a patch on the arcade machine. ***The Bottom Line*** – Souped up, but not souped up enough. ★★

HARLEY DAVIDSON

Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Slick as oil, with lots of neat touches to put you into Easy Rider mode. ***Downers*** – The actual game is uninspiring and repetitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Born to be mild. ★

HEART OF THE DRAGON

Avatar Computing £25.99

Uppers – Lots of colours, and an (almost serious) attempt to do something new with the fantasy beat-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Beyond the almost impressive technical trickery lies not very much at all really. ***The Bottom Line*** – If your friend has bought it, give it a go. Then laugh very heartily at him. Entertaining in an embarrassing sort of way. ★

HELTER SKELTER

Audiogenic £19.99

Uppers – Highly original gameplay; password system greatly increases addictiveness; great cartoon sound effects. ***Downers*** – Extremely tricky control method which is difficult to use even with practice. Gets samey after a while. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dubious lasting appeal, but a fun little game if you fancy something a bit different. ★★★

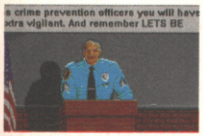
HERO QUEST

Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and deceptively addictive. You don't think you've been playing it for long, but suddenly it's Thursday and you're a week late for dinner. ***Downers*** – Not so good as a one-player game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps surprisingly, a highly entertaining game, and absolutely ideal when you've got game-playing friends round. ★★★★

HILL STREET BLUES

Krisalis £24.99


a crime prevention officers you will have
xtra vigilant. And remember LETS BE

Uppers – A good feel for the TV series; characters (both player and others) that you can identify with. It's certainly an interesting way to handle a licence. ***Downers*** – Gets repetitive pretty quickly, and it's not the slickest game around. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good next step for someone who's played *Sim City* to death and fancies a new challenge. Limited appeal, though. ★★★

HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Unusual idea; suitably spooky graphics. ***Downers*** – But let down by the dull platform nature of the game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Funny to watch, but fairly average to play. ★★

HYDRA

Domark £24.99

Uppers – Um, nice moving-water effect. ***Downers*** – Terrible control feel; duff, unclear graphics; feeble gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – An almost-competent conversion of a useless game. ★

IMMORTAL, THE

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A game which makes real use of 1 meg memory... ***Downers*** – ...which means most Amiga owners will never see it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best fantasy arcade adventure by any means, but the gorgeous graphics lift it well above average. ★★★

IMPERIUM

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – As vast as they come, with more twiddly strategy bits than you could reasonably hope for. ***Downers*** – Mac-style graphics look dull, and the whole game lacks any visual sparkle. ***The Bottom Line*** – One for dedicated strategy-heads only. *Supremacy* fans might dig it. ★★

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE

US Gold £19.99

Uppers – More fine-tuning gives *Indy* the friendliest control system yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! ***Downers*** – Waiting for Indy to trek across the screen all the time can get annoying and some of the puzzles are just a wee bit too abstract. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite simply the best Amiga adventure to date. ★★★★

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts £24.95

Uppers – An immensely playable blend of true racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice line in remote camera views (if you've got a 1 meg machine). ***Downers*** – Track repetition hinders lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just fabulous. ★★★★★

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Soccer in 3D? A very brave attempt to do something new with a tired old game-style... ***Downers*** – ...which unfortunately falls flat on its face. ***The Bottom Line*** – Foul. ★

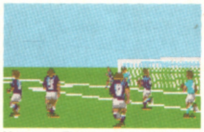
INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS

Palace £24.99

Uppers – Novel use of 3D polygon graphics, with fluid animation and nine camera angles. ***Downers*** – Its attempt to re-create the feel of tennis isn't entirely successful. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very good, but it's got stiff competition from the likes of *Pro Tennis Tour 2*. ★★★

I PLAY 3D SOCCER

Simulmondo £25.99



Uppers – The most dynamic and visually convincing representation of the sport yet. ***Downers*** – The realism is so high that you hardly ever get to kick the ball, and the 3D display system can be downright confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately flawed. ★★

IRON LORD

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Cinemaware-style medieval epic with plenty of sub-games and atmospheric presentation. ***Downers*** – It's just too tough for most, and with little real depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while. ★★

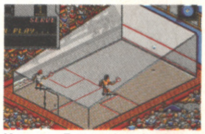
ISHIDO

Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Take *Othello*, add some *Go*, then throw in a few herbs and spices and heat until brown. The result is one piping hot Chinese board game called *Ishido*. ***Downers*** – Irritating dialogue boxes, and the luck element can infuriate. ***The Bottom Line*** – An engaging piece of Chinese culture, which should really be played with a good strong cup of tea. ★★

JAHANGIR KHAN'S CHAMPIONSHIP SQUASH

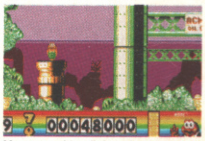
Krisalis £25.53



Uppers – Easy to play, closely adheres to the rules of the real thing, and there's plenty of options on offer. ***Downers*** – There's not really a lot you can do with a squash game, is there? ***The Bottom Line*** – The best squash game around for the Amiga. (Not that there's much in the way of competition). ★★★

JAMES POND

Millennium £24.99



Uppers – It's slicker than a pot of Brylcreem, with beautifully simple gameplay to instantly hook the unsuspecting player. ***Downers*** – Lacks any real adrenalin-pumping qualities. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loads of initial cute appeal, but really a pretty run-of-the-mill arcade runabout. ★★★

JUDGE DREDD

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the grave. ***Downers*** – Another *Judge Dredd* game screwed up totally. No humour, no graphics, no game. ***The Bottom Line*** – One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dredd. One day. ★

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly playable race game. More fun than a packet of Jammy Dodgers. ***Downers*** – Unspectacular and overpriced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not sure why, but it really is jolly good fun. ★★

KEEF THE THIEF

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent hack, slash and puzzle solving with some superb stylised graphics. ***Downers*** – It still plays like your average role-playing adventure. ***The Bottom Line*** – Respectable Tolkien-esque fare. ★★★

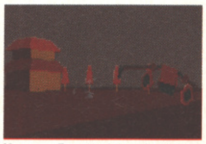
KICK OFF 2

Anco £19.99

Uppers – The same great features as *Kick Off 1* plus better goalies. ***Downers*** – Those better goalies (it can prove very hard to score). ***The Bottom Line*** – The definitive footie game (even if a suspiciously high proportion of people find it all but uncontrollable). ★★★★★

THE KILLING CLOUD

Image Works £24.99



Uppers – Fast-moving and pretty graphics, bags of depth, and a great creation of atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Riddled with inconsistencies and badly-executed ideas. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a contender, but badly lets itself down in the logic stakes.★★★

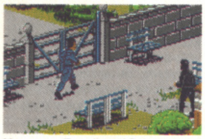
THE KILLING GAME SHOW

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Straightforward fun game sharing some aspects of gameplay with *Rainbow Islands*. The interactive replay feature is interesting, innovative, and useful. ***Downers*** – The usual Psygnosis metallic graphics don't really suit; it gets a bit too complicated for its own good later on, detracting from the simplicity that initially makes it so addictive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite unusually poor graphics, this is one of Psygnosis' best and most playable games to date. ★★★

LAST NINJA 2

System 3 £24.99



Uppers – Excellent 3D isometric graphics and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. ***Downers*** – The game just isn't cohesive, and it plays like a pig. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really in the Bruce Lee league (barely scraping Jackie Chan level to be honest). ★★

KLAX

Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – More scope than *Tetris*, better looking and sounding too; deceptive pace means it gets pretty frantic without you really noticing. ***Downers*** – Not for the slow-witted. If you don't have a naturally calm nature you'll chuck it out the window within minutes. ***The Bottom Line*** – A real mind-wrencher and a near perfect conversion. ★★★★

LANCASTER

Actual Screenshots £24.95

Uppers – Fairly impressive 3D polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Lack of variation and any real excitement means it barely gets off the ground. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elevates averageness to an art form. ★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Ridiculous, over-sexed plot. Adventuring for consenting adults. ***Downers*** – Slightly obtrusive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Check it out – but only if you are over eighteen. ★★★

LEMMINGS

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. Invents a totally new category – the save-'em-up. ***Downers*** – As is the norm with such strikingly original concepts, some may wonder just what all the fuss is about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. *Lemmings* rule. ★★★★★

LINE OF FIRE

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Imagine all the Rambo films back-to-back on fast-forward, and you have a good idea how much violence this game contains. ***Downers*** – You also have a pretty good idea of how intelligent it is. ***The Bottom Line*** – An impossible arcade conversion proves totally and utterly impossible. ★★

LOOM

Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Great atmosphere, enhanced by the accompanying tape, booklets etc. It's certainly a lavish package. ***Downers*** – An adventure without typing? It certainly won't appeal to purists, and the 'audio drama' is laughable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Lucasfilm strive for something different. The results are interesting, if not totally successful. ★★★

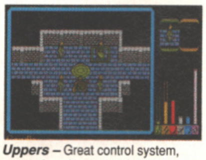
LOST PATROL

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Graphics are nothing short of stunning. ***Downers*** – Unfortunately the game itself is incredibly tedious (if you can actually find oe in there). ***The Bottom Line*** – Atmospheric but lacking any playability. One for Vietnam obsessives only. ★★

LORDS OF CHAOS

Blade £24.99



Uppers – Great control system, comprehensive and logical. Lots of levels equal great lastability. ***Downers*** – Very little action; not much compulsion to reach your rather abstract goal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointing game from Julian Gollop, not up to his usual standard. Wait for *Laser Squad 2*. ★★★

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – A wealth of control options lets you make the game more arcadey or simulationy according to preference. Bags of 'feel'. ***Downers*** – The other cars are a bit flat-looking, and half the screen is wasted in one-player mode. (You don't appear to be able to turn the annoying music off either). ***The Bottom Line*** – An extremely good driving game, even more fun with two players. ★★★★

MAGIC FLY

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Very challenging. ***Downers*** – But not too thrilling, and who wants wireframe 3D in 1991? ***The Bottom Line*** – You may not find it worth all the bother of getting into it. ★★

MANHUNTER 2

Sierra (Activision) £29.99

Uppers – More exciting than normal for this type of game. ***Downers*** – Badly-judged puzzles, awful graphics, and the arcade sequences are execrable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dire game at a scandalous price. ★

MANIX

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Charmingly surreal. ***Downers*** – But it's just an updated *Q-Bert* really, isn't it? ***The Bottom Line*** – Never really gets its hooks into you. ★★

MASTERBLAZER

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellent two player mode, fast 3D action – all in all a respectable updating of the original future-sport game. ***Downers*** – Despite the new features, *Masterblazer* looks and feels dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun for a few hours, but too simplistic to hold any lasting appeal. ★★★

MEAN STREETS

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Many different styles combine well for (ahem) a wide-ranging gameplay experience. ***Downers*** – Dragged down by disk swapping. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good solid entertainment. A bit like Lenny Henry, really. ★★★

MEGA TRAVELLER 1

Empire £30.64

Converse
Item
Vehicle

Uppers – Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action. ***Downers*** – It might all seem a bit too familiar to *Elite* players; occasional long disk-access pauses can irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderful piece of role-playing software that everyone should play at least once. After that, you're unlikely to want to stop. ★★★★★

MERCS

US Gold £24.99

★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

Uppers – Faithful conversion of the coin-op, good-looking and fast-moving...**Downers** – ...but still just another *Commando* clone. **The Bottom Line** – Great at what it does, but you're likely to want rather more from a game in this day and age. ★★★

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well-balanced gameplay with a smooth difficulty curve makes it stand out from a hundred similar coin-op conversions. Actually more playable than the arcade original. **Downers** – Control is awkward at first; could be a touch faster. **The Bottom Line** – Best of its type. ★★★

MIDWINTER

Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Vast as something that is very vast indeed, with loads of strategy bits, and some very nice 3D indeed. **Downers** – Occasional pockets of boredom tend to break the tension; apparently very easy to complete if you know how. **The Bottom Line** – Mike Singleton finally brings his classic *Lords of Midnight* up to date. ★★★

MIGHTY BOMB JACK

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Classic gameplay with added 16-bit features like, erm, power-ups. **Downers** – Sprawling levels lose the original's frantic urgency. **The Bottom Line** – Dull, dull, and then again dull. ★

MIG-29

Domark £29.99

Uppers – So real you'll be be hanging pictures of Gorby on your wall. **Downers** – Only five missions, with little in the way of excitement. **The Bottom Line** – Brave, but ultimately too techie for most Amiga owners. ★★★

M1 TANK PLATOON

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Cheaper than a real tank. **Downers** – Needs a lot of perseverance. **The Bottom Line** – Not as much fun as actually having a tank platoon on the M1. ★★

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Some genuinely funny humour, captures the style of the TV show without just rehashing it. **Downers** – Basic gameplay is pretty, erm, basic. **The Bottom Line** – Still fun after you've seen all the jokes. ★★★

MOONSHINE RACERS

Millennium £24.99

Uppers: Erm, great hillbilly music. **Downers:** Slow, graphically horrible, totally derivative. **The Bottom Line**: Almost as bad as Amiga *Chase HQ*, and you've got to admit that's pretty damn bad. ★

MUDS

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Quite funny. **Downers** – Do we really need another rugby/basketball/ violence-based future sport? **The Bottom Line** – Giving everything silly names doesn't make this game different to the dozen others it's just the same as. ★★

MURDER

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Highly atmospheric black-and-white look. **Downers** – Repetitive. **The Bottom Line** – If you've got plenty of patience, it's an absorbing brain-teaser. ★★★

MYSTICAL

Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – Fresh graphical approach to the the usual fantasy scenario. **Downers** – Really badly-thought-out two-player mode. **The Bottom Line** – An uninspired *Gauntlet* clone. ★★

'NAM

Domark £24.95

Uppers – Heavily researched, convincing and (dirty word) educational strategic war game. **Downers** – Very hard to win, the whole serious look to the thing could be a turn off. **The Bottom Line** – Political as well as tactical decision making gives a new dimension to war games. ★★★

NARC

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great blood-spattering action; very close to the coin-op. **Downers** – Very dodgy on the playability front (not to say morally). **The Bottom Line** – Limited. ★★

NARCO POLICE

Dinamic £24.99

Uppers – Looks excellent. **Downers** – Computer takes a 'creative' attitude towards obeying control commands. **The Bottom Line** – Loud and action-packed blaster for expert commandos. ★★

NEBULUS

Hewson £19.99

Uppers – Truly innovative gameplay and graphics which wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. The climb up/fall down routine makes it almost too addictive for safety. **Downers** – Not for softies – some could find this just too frustrating. **The Bottom Line** – Classically simple design makes for a game that won't let go once it gets its hooks into you (which will be about two minutes after you pick it up). ★★★★

NEUROMANCER

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – The only contender in its field. **Downers** – That doesn't make it any good, though. **The Bottom Line** – None of the atmosphere of the book. Not so much Chiba City as Average City. ★★

NIGHT SHIFT

Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically innovative and full of character. **Downers** – Detail-packed background can make it hard to see where the actual platforms are; more time spent loading than playing. **The Bottom Line** – A few instructions would work wonders, but the game's overwhelming charm pulls it through. ★★★

NEW YORK WARRIORS

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Reasonably atmospheric, undemanding blaster. **Downers** – Oh God, *Ikari Warriors Part 844194365408354*. **The Bottom Line** – You can buy much better, cheaper. ★

NINE LIVES

ARC £24.99

Uppers – Cute and inventive platform fun. **Downers** – Tougher than Mike Tyson in a suit of armour. With a bazooka. **The Bottom Line** – You've got as much chance of finishing it as Wile E. Coyote has of catching Road Runner. ★★★

NINJA REMIX

System 3 £24.99

Uppers – Closer to what *Last Ninja 2* should have been. Extremely high-quality graphics... **Downers** – ...hiding a near-terminal lack of gameplay. **The Bottom Line** – Ideal for game players with dicky hearts, otherwise keep the electro-shock equipment handy for those, er, sedate moments. ★★

NINJA WARRIORS

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Novel 'Cinemascope'-esque screen layout. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but doesn't get rid of irritating swapping. **Downers** – Extremely repetitive action palls quickly. **The Bottom Line** – Even for a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time. ★★

NITRO

Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Groovy graphics, smooth scrolling, excellent car-handling. **Downers** – A practically infinite-credit system means the game has little sense of urgency. You have to guess the course on later levels. **The Bottom Line** – Needs more in the way of immediate danger to be addictive, but (unlike many similar games) is as fun in one player mode as with a couple of chums. ★★★

OBITUS

Psygnosis £34.99

Uppers – Intro would make a great Amiga *Deathchase* game. **Downers** – *Obitus* itself is a dull *Dungeon Master* rip-off. **The Bottom Line** – Boring and ridiculously priced. ★★

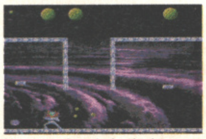
ONSLAUGHT

Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Lovely sound and music; lots of depth. **Downers** – Very confusing graphics and gameplay, and the main sequences are technically below the level of your average budget game. **The Bottom Line** – Caught between the two stools of wargaming and platform zap games, this isn't a very good example of either. ★★

OOOPS UP

Demonware £24.95



Uppers – Arcade fun in the *Pang*, er, 'tradition'. **Downers** – Colossally inferior to the real thing. **The Bottom Line** – The excellent sampled music isn't enough to save this bare-faced rip-off. Check out the real thing instead. ★★

OPERATION STEALTH

Delphine (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – More of a James Bond feel than any official James Bond game. Not too much disk faffing about either (which makes a change). **Downers** – Arcade sequences will irritate the adventure purist. It's also tedious having to examine every pixel of every location by hand. **The Bottom Line** – The best game of its type so far. A reasonably friendly operating system and an immense challenge. ★★★★

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Utterly mindless genocidal slaughterfest; perhaps the best *Op Wolf* style game to date. **Downers** – More of the coin-op's appeal is down to the cabinet-mounted Uzi than you might think, leaving the Amiga version somewhat 'flat'. **The Bottom Line** – Everything you could expect a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* to be. ★★★

ORIENTAL GAMES

MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Joystick editor makes fighting user-friendly. **Downers** – So out-of-date it's wearing flares. **The Bottom Line** – Misleading title disguises a standard beat-'em-up. ★★

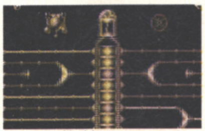
PANG

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A perfect arcade conversion; novel two player mode and heaps of addictiveness make it the last word in cute games. **Downers** – The long wait between games is a bit of a bind. **The Bottom Line** – You'll be blowing bubbles forever. ★★★★★

PARADROID 90

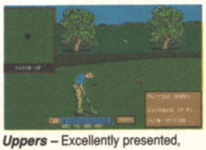
Hewson £24.99



Uppers – Nothing compares to *Paradroid* in terms of original gameplay and elegant bas-relief graphics. **Downers** – Old C64 games players may be disappointed with the lack of new features. **The Bottom Line** – A five year old game idea, and it still wipes the floor with most competition. ★★★★★

PGA TOUR GOLF

Electronic Arts £24.99



Uppers – Excellently presented, comprehensive, and easy as pie to get into. **Downers** – There's a limited amount of scope to any golf game, and *PGA* doesn't even try to transcend it. **The Bottom Line** – The pinnacle of Amiga golf so far. ★★★★★

PHOTON STORM

ARC £24.99

Uppers – Incredibly frantic blasting experience. **Downers** – Not one to buy if you want to show off your shiny new Amiga's snazzy graphics. **The Bottom Line** – If you're a Minter fan you'll love it. A finely-tuned adrenalin machine. ★★★★

PICK'N'PILE

Ubi Soft £19.99

Uppers – Fascinating mix of *Puzznic* and *Boulder Dash*. **Downers** – 8-bit graphics don't help visual clarity any. **The Bottom Line** – Not enough variation to sustain it for long. ★★

PLOTTING

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A novelty – a puzzle game with cute graphics! **Downers** – Gets samey after a while, less freedom than other puzzlers makes for a shorter life-span. **The Bottom Line** – A charming little game, but eventually dull. ★★★★

POLICE QUEST 2

Sierra (Activision) £34.95

Uppers – Er, very realistic sim of a policeman's lot. **Downers** – ie half the game is form-filling. **The Bottom Line** – Too much like a tedious day at the office. ★★

POPULOUS

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Totally unique gameplay and smooth 3D isometric graphics add up to a game with depth and sparkle. **Downers** – The icon control system really is very confusing. **The Bottom Line** – An essential for all open-minded Amiga owners. ★★★★★

THE POWER

Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Heaps of levels and a screen designer keep lasting appeal up, and the music is excellent. **Downers** – A touch derivative, and lacks that indefinable something that makes a puzzle game great. **The Bottom Line** – Try before you buy, you might like it, but rather average to our eyes. ★★★

POWER DRIFT

Activision £19.99

Uppers – All the arcade's tracks, characters, and secret features. **Downers** – The graphics can get very confusing, and the gameplay isn't really that close to the original. **The Bottom Line** – A good stab at a very difficult conversion, but not quite good enough. ★★★

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – The brave new face of wargames... **Downers** – ...which looks suspiciously like *Populous*. **The Bottom Line** – Despite similarities to a certain other title, *Powermonger* really is an excellent game in its own right. ★★★★

PREDATOR 2

Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of zapping to be done and, er, that's about it really. **Downers** – Poor colour choice, unimaginative gameplay, bad control feel. **The Bottom Line** – Not as good as *Operation Wolf*, and now some £18 more expensive. Don't bother. ★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund £24.99

Uppers – Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and some good old-fashioned gameplay. **Downers** – Control is initially tricky, and getting sent to the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. **The Bottom Line** – Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this? ★★★★★

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. **Downers** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. **The Bottom Line** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

PURSUIT TO EARTH

Exocet £19.95

Uppers – Reminiscent of *Gyruss*, the classic arcade zapper. **Downers** – But completely crap. **The Bottom Line** – About as much fun as getting hit by a real Exocet. ★

PUZZNIC

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Classically simple and very addictive, not to mention original. **Downers** – Infuriatingly tough on later levels. **The Bottom Line** – Don't be put off by the useless graphics, this is a wonderful brain teaser. ★★★★

QUEST FOR GLORY II – TRIAL BY FIRE

Sierra £40.85

Uppers – Sorry, can't think of any. Oh no, wait, you do get lots of disks for your money. **Downers** – But no game to put on them. Incompetently programmed, dreadfully-designed, staggeringly-overpriced trash. **The Bottom Line** – Possibly the worst Amiga game you will ever see. Avoid it like an bad-tempered tiger with toothache. ★

RAILROAD TYCOON

MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Frightening amount of depth. **Downers** – Very slow to get into (and very slow even when you *do* get into it). **The Bottom Line** – If you've got a lot of time to invest in it, well worth a look. ★★★★

RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE

Anco £19.95

Uppers – Well-programmed *Super Sprint* clone that's great fun with multiple players. **Downers** – Limited lastability. **The Bottom Line** – Still one of the best in its field, but that's more down to lack of competition than anything else. ★★

RANX

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Totally ideologically unsound. ***Downers*** – Totally ideologically unsound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brilliantly-presented but ultimately limited comic strip beat-'em-up. Ideologically unsound. ★★

RED STORM RISING

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Unbelievably realistic, the best of its kind. ***Downers*** – Almost total lack of moving graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – A strategist's dream, but if you really want a submarine experience this realistic, go join the navy. ★★

RESOLUTION 101

Millenium £24.95

Uppers – Extremely fast, plenty to do. ***Downers*** – Sparse, very basic graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just a little bit too repetitive. ★★★

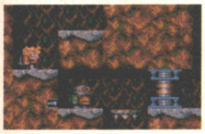
REVELATION

Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Neat idea – a puzzle game based on safe cracking. ***Downers*** – Too complex to just pick up and play – bad news for a puzzler. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad, but could have been better presented (and who thought up that utterly meaningless name?) ★★

RICK DANGEROUS 2

MicroStyle £24.99



Uppers – Cute, colourful, action packed, immensely playable and better paced than *Rick 1*... ***Downers*** – ...but really not all that dissimilar, and still packed with far too much in the way of unforeseeable danger. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loveable. ★★★

ROBOCOP 2

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great graphics, generally excellent presentation. ***Downers*** – Awkward controls, some infuriating gameplay traits, and it's all a touch too formulaic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a good deal better. ★★★

ROGUE TROOPER

Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – Fairly entertaining arcade adventure with devious but logical puzzles and an excellent free collectors' comic. ***Downers*** – One life – one mistake and you're all the way back to the start of the first level (Aaarrgh!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun for the persistent, and a good licence for a change. ★★

RORKE'S DRIFT

Impressions £19.99

Uppers – Authentic table-top wargame sim. ***Downers*** – No sound, few options, irritating to play. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very limited (in every sense). ★

ROTOX

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Rotoscape (tm) works very well. ***Downers*** – Crap sound, massively irritating continue system, huge disk-accessing pauses between levels and games. ***The Bottom Line*** – Utter trash. ★

SATAN

Dinamic £19.99

Uppers – You won't finish it in a hurry. ***Downers*** – Spookily similar to *Black Tiger*. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'age' in 'average'. ★★

SHADOW DANCER

US Gold £25.99

Uppers – Looks lovely, and the ninja dog sidekick adds at least a little to a rather tired game style. ***Downers*** – It's that same old repetitive beat-'em-up gameplay again. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very classy conversion of a totally generic slasher. ★★

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

Psygnosis £34.95

Uppers – Jaw-dropping graphics, and, er, um... that's it. ***Downers*** – Your first few games will be shorter than the accessing pauses between them. The Roger Dean T-shirt is nauseous. ***The Bottom Line*** – £34.95? Get out of here! ★★

SHADOW WARRIORS

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Look, leave me alone, it's close to the arcade game, what else do you want me to say? ***Downers*** – Very tough and completely unrewarding. ***The Bottom Line*** – There's about as much game in here as there is in an empty crate with 'Tomatoes from Greenland' stamped on it. ★

SHANGHAI

Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers*** – Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

SHOCKWAVE

Digital Magic £24.99

Uppers – Lightning fast arcade quality *Afterburner/Star Wars* graphics. ***Downers*** – Tactical sections get in the way. ***The Bottom Line*** – A potentially great arcade monster shoot-'em-up ruined by trying to be brainy as well. ★★★

SIMULCRA

MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Mad, frantic 3D blast. ***Downers*** – Not much brain-expanding involved. ***The Bottom Line*** – An amphetamine classic. ★★★

SIRIUS 7

CRL £24.99

Uppers – Technically adequate. ***Downers*** – No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as action-packed as *Xenon 2*. In pause mode. ★

SKI OR DIE

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***Downers*** – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, patchy collection of unimpressive sub games. ★

SKULL AND CROSSBONES

Domark £24.99

Uppers – It's all reasonably true to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Pity it was so crap then, isn't it? Appallingly slow, critically limited and bug-ridden. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun being keelhauled. ★

SPEEDBALL II

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – The ultimate future sport game to date – fast, brutal, enormously playable. The Bitmaps' finest moment. ***Downers*** – Teams can be hard to tell apart in the heat of the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy or die. ★★★★★

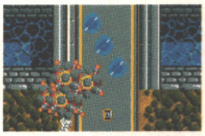
SPELLBOUND

Psyclapse £24.99

Uppers – Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, the packaging is nice. ***Downers*** – Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hugely boring arcade adventure thing that's overpriced by £20. ★

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

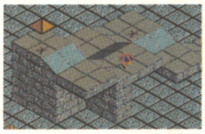
Domark £24.99



Uppers – Lovely tiny graphics, tough gameplay that nonetheless rewards a bit of effort. ***Downers*** – Only half-a-dozen levels – all completable after some practice – means it won't last all that long. ***The Bottom Line*** – Easily the best Bond game so far, and a fun *Spy Hunter* clone into the bargain, though not something you'll play for months. ★★★

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

Activision £24.99



Uppers – Another example of an 8-bit classic brought bang up to date with a sprawling play area and loads of new features. ***Downers*** – Bizarre controls to get to grips with and the graphics could be better. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superlative game design, and total addiction. Frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece. ★★★★★

SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. ***Downers*** – Pitifully slow, and the different sections don't really seem to gel together. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a few hours to kill while you're waiting for a train, this is a game that you can load up without fear of it causing you to miss it. (On the other hand, standing on the platform might be more fun). ★★

STARGLIDER II

Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Instant 3D blasting appeal, with extra depth for those who want it. ***Downers*** – Slightly too repetitive in the long-term. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best *Star Wars*-inspired releases on the Amiga. ★★★

STARBLADE

Palace £24.99

Uppers – Original concept. ***Downers*** – Sod all sound-wise, technically nothing to shout about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Run-of-the-mill. ★★

ST. DRAGON

Storm £24.99

Uppers – Lovely graphics, a helpful software autofire option, and a challenging difficulty curve lift this out of the morass of horizontal zappers. The Dynamic Loading System is an infinitely wonderful idea. ***Downers*** – A bit too tough for most, and the power-ups are unexciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the few sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-ups that you really should own. ★★★★

STORM ACROSS EUROPE

SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Playing the baddies makes a change. ***Downers*** – Takes ages to get into, and the graphics are primitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too ambitious for its own good. ★

STORMBALL

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably passable graphics. ***Downers*** – Utterly dire game design, no feeling of speed or excitement, highly confusing and largely pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you're looking for a good way to waste £25, throw it down a drain rather than buy this. ★

STRIDER 2

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Good animation and plenty of challenge. ***Downers*** – Very little advance on *Strider*, and shoddily presented. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's everything that's bad about sequels, and bears all the hallmarks of a rush job. ★★

STUN RUNNER

Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Er...the music isn't entirely crap. ***Downers*** – Hopelessly slow, graphically primitive, plus there's a very terminal lack of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – We'd rather see a great conversion of *Galaxians* than someone make a pig's ear of a game they knew they couldn't convert in the first place. ★

SUPERCARS 2

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Loads of tracks and tough gameplay means plenty of lasting interest. The two-player mode enhances things considerably. ***Downers*** – Arguably less playable than the original. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you only want to play it in one player mode, buy the *16 Bit Hitz* compilation featuring the original *Supercars* instead. ★★★

SUPER MONACO GP

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and fun. ***Downers*** – Bears very little resemblance to the coin-op. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very good racing game, but don't expect the arcade. ★★★

SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Flawless arcade conversion. ***Downers*** – The track sequence, though identical to the original, is silly (four of the first eight races are on track 1), the difficulty curve is steep, and control is just a tad over-sensitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – The Amiga's best *Super Sprint* game yet, but with some annoying niggles that stop it being the true classic it might have been. ★★★★

SUPER WONDER BOY

Activision £19.99

Uppers – Perfect difficulty curve lets you get just a little bit further every go. Cute graphics add to the charm and the shops where you can spend your gold give it a little extra scope. ***Downers*** – Slightly lacking in action, too slow for some. Not exactly modern looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great game in the *Mario* vein, but with less enemies and more depth. ★★★

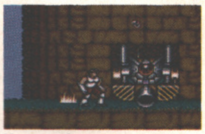
SUPREMACY

Virgin £29.99

Uppers – Galactic empire-building with some smart graphics. ***Downers*** – The number based gameplay renders it all completely uninteresting. ***The Bottom Line*** – For accountants and gullible people only. ★★

SWITCHBLADE II

Gremlin £25.99



Uppers – Gorgeous console-like graphics, tried-and-tested gameplay, packed full of detail and lovely touches. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too simple. ***The Bottom Line*** – Absolutely superb. Arguably the best Amiga platform game to date. ★★★★★

SWIV

Storm £24.99

Uppers – Looks good, sounds good, comes with a neat two-player option – and all in one (massive) level too! ***Downers*** – There aren't any (unless you find all those drab military-style colours a bit depressing). ***The Bottom Line*** – Frantic – one of the best shoot-'em-ups we've seen. ★★★★★

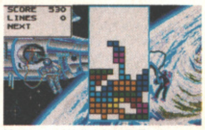
SWORDS AND GALLEONS

Idea £25.99

Uppers – Uses the classic trading game style to. great effect. ***Downers*** – Easy to complete and the stupid omission of a save game option. ***The Bottom Line*** – A minority interest sort of affair. ★★

TETRIS

Infogrames £19.99



Uppers – Well, it is still *Tetris*. ***Downers*** – But it's probably the worst version yet seen on the Amiga, and that's saying something. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely stinky. (Stick with the PD versions). ★

THEME PARK MYSTERY

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Great feel; looks and sounds lovely. ***Downers*** – Arcade sections are fairly pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – Games which mix adventures with arcade sequences always suffer for it. ★★

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

US Gold £25.99

Uppers – The closest thing yet to a fully interactive story. Enormous playability, pleasing puzzles and great dollops of – yes! – genuinely witty humour come together to form something very glorious indeed. ***Downers*** – Despite the five disks, you'll still need a full meg, and once the game is completed you'll probably never come back to it again. ***The Bottom Line*** – An adventure that looks and plays better than almost any arcade game. Software heaven. ★★★★★

TEAM SUZUKI

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very fast, with some pretty hairy track views.

★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

Unintentionally hilarious replay feature. ***Downers*** – Insanely sensitive to control. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enough fun to keep you playing until you can at least stay on the road for five seconds at 60mph, but a bit too unrealistic to compete with *Indy 500*. ★★★

TEAM YANKEE

Empire £29.99

Uppers – The action slant on the standard tank sim makes it more immediate and accessible... ***Downers*** – ...but what a pity it lacks depth and excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't work as a strategy sim or arcade blast. Try *Sherman M4* if you must try own a tank simulation of some description. ★★

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES

Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – It doesn't have the word 'Ninja' in the title...***Downers*** – ...but even that doesn't save it from being utterly awful in every way. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun playing with a real turtle. Or a real mutant. ★

THUNDERSTRIKE

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – *Defender* for the 3D generation. ***Downers*** – An absolute PC classic, so why is the Amiga conversion so appalling? ***The Bottom Line*** – A seriously average game which could have been an absolute gem. *Thunderstrike*? More like *Chunderstrike*. ★★

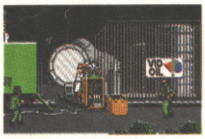
TIE BREAK

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – More of a simulation than a *Pong* game. ***Downers*** – Whoever thought up the 'scrolling court' idea should be shot. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hideously complex control makes this one more hassle than it's worth. ★★

THE TIME MACHINE

Activision £24.99



Uppers – It's nice to play a game that doesn't have 10,000 screens for a change. ***Downers*** – Gets frustrating having to do everything ten times. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too clever by half. ★★

TIME SOLDIER

Electrocoin £24.99

Uppers – Fair graphically, plenty of action. ***Downers*** – Bad conversion, repetitive gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Poor quality, overpriced rush-job. ★

TORVAK THE WARRIOR

Core Design £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful, gloomy graphics. ***Downers*** – Incredibly slow and unremarkable *Rastan* game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unresponsive control and a talentless hero cripple the gameplay. Check out *Chuck Rock* to find out what Core can really do. ★

TOTAL RECALL

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A fair bit of gameplay variation. ***Downers*** – Unfriendly controls, uninspired design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Solid but unexciting. No feel for the movie. (And couldn't they afford the rights to use Arnie's real face?) ★★

TOURNAMENT GOLF

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Authentic arcade port. ***Downers*** – Nobody ever played the arcade game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely average golfing yawnerama. ★★

TOWER FRA

Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Yes, you guessed it, it's an air traffic control tower simulation. Not as boring as it sounds. ***Downers*** – It's still fairly boring though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good training for the next generation of air traffic controllers. ★★

TOYOTA CELICA RALLY

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very impressively detailed – a lot of effort has been taken to get an authentic feel here. ***Downers*** – Be prepared to dig deep to find the actual game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps too good a simulation to be much fun to play. ★★

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT

Domark/Incentive £49.99

Uppers – Creating your own games (or simply designing little worlds) is great fun. ***Downers*** – Well, it's not really a game as such, is it? It's pretty slow too, and making anything really worthwhile gets very complicated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive and of limited appeal, but if you've always itched to create a Freescape game you can't really complain. ★★★

TREASURE TRAP

Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Graphics convey well the feel of being in a rusting hulk underwater. Adds an arcade adventure element to the *Knight Lore* genre. ***Downers*** – Very sluggish play with an unhelpful diagonal joystick system. Horribly confusing perspective, even for the game type. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun, but only because *Head Over Heels* hasn't made it to the Amiga. ★★★

TURN IT

Kingsoft £19.99

Uppers – Interesting *Shanghai* variant. ***Downers*** – Not for the visually-impaired. ***The Bottom Line*** – Intriguing and pretty. Well worth checking out. ★★★

TURRICAN

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Exceptional playability, and some great weapons. ***Downers*** – Sprawling layout of levels means the game can become unfocussed. If your joystick hasn't got autofire, forget it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just too big, and having the 'continue' send you right back to the start of a (huge) level doesn't help any. ★★★

TURRICAN 2

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. ★★★

TUSKER

System 3 (Activision) £24.99

Uppers – Nothing actually wrong with it. ***Downers*** – Nothing new. Nothing interesting. Just nothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Depressingly average. ★★

ULTIMA V

Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – The scope and depth of *Ultima V* goes way beyond other role-playing adventures, even previous Ultima releases. ***Downers*** – Not a bit of joystick action in sight; some may find the size of the game daunting. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Ultima V* offers arguably the best in graphic fantasy (at least until *Ultima VI* comes along). ★★★★★

ULTIMATE GOLF

Gremlin £24.95

Uppers – Very accurate. ***Downers*** – The curious graphic style is distracting, and the sound is dire. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting and realistic golf sim, but unlikely to fare well against the competition. ★★★

ULTIMATE RIDE

Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Realistic handling. ***Downers*** – Dreadful gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another failed attempt at the accuracy/fun game balance. ★★

UNREAL

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Looks very striking, nice variation in gameplay too. ***Downers*** – The absurd 'save game' feature spoils things a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – A cut above your average hack-'em-up. ★★★

VAXINE

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful-looking, original and imaginative shoot-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Very, very, very (very) hard. ***The Bottom Line*** – Be prepared to tear your hair out. ★★★★

VECTOR CHAMPIONSHIP RUN

Impulze £24.99

Uppers – Pretty speedy. ***Downers*** – Uncontrollable. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's the point in a game you can't play? (c.f. Rhetorical Questions For Journalists, Vol. 1) ★

VENUS THE FLYTRAP

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Pretty colour-graduated backgrounds and excellent animation. The *P-47*-esque bonus round gives variation, and the attention to detail makes it feel like an arcade game. ***Downers*** – Lacking in challenge for the first few levels, and after that you'll be getting a bit bored with it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but palls fairly quickly. Ideal for younger players. ★★

VIZ

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Very true to the comic. ***Downers*** – Very shallow and limited. The jokes only really work the first time you see them. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun while it lasts, but after the first couple of hours you've seen all it's got to offer. ★★

VOODOO NIGHTMARE

Palace £24.99

Uppers – Clear, sharp graphics. ***Downers*** – Maddeningly sensitive controls. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice change – an average game. ★★

WARLOCK THE AVENGER

Millenium £24.99

Uppers – Playable and quite engrossing scrolling arcade adventure romp. ***Downers*** – An 8-bit game in 16-bit's clothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Druid* slightly updated for the 90s, and not by any stretch of the imagination worth £25. ★★

WARZONE

Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Graphics have a degree of character to them, and it's pretty tough. ***Downers*** – Adds very little to the hackneyed *Ikari Warriors* format. ***The Bottom Line*** – Competent but deadly dull shoot-'em-up that you've seen a dozen times before. ★★

WEB OF TERROR

Impressions £19.99

Uppers – Animation is good. ***Downers*** – Totally frustrating. Duff graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost unplayable; not impressive in any way. ★

WELLTRIS

Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – The kind of game people spend decades playing. ***Downers*** – If you didn't like *Tetris*, don't even think about it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as simple as its predecessor, but nearly as addictive. ★★★

WHITE SHARKS

Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Exceptionally good graphics, novel 'choose-your-own-power-ups' weapon system. ***Downers*** – Too fast to have any decent feel, and incredibly unimaginative. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'bog standard' into 'bog standard shoot-'em-up'. Duff. ★★

WILDLIFE

MD Production £19.99

Uppers – Ideologically sound. ***Downers*** – *Operation Wolf* without shooting is like swimming without water. ***The Bottom Line*** – Utterly desperate. ★

WINGS

Cinemaware £29.99

Uppers – Authentic WW1 feel. ***Downers*** – Ludicrous disk swapping. Very little gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far too simple for a sim, and too expensive for what it is. ★★

WINGS OF DEATH

Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Range of power-ups is good, even including power-downs! ***Downers*** – Not the most innovative game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as much fun as *Xenon 2*, though not as pretty. ★★★

WIPE OUT

Gonzo Games £19.99

Uppers – Highly tactical game with quite a surprising amount of excitement too. ***Downers*** – A light cycles game in 1990 is hardly the peak of innovation (in fact it wasn't even the peak of innovation way back in 1980). ***The Bottom Line*** – Poor graphics, sound (etc) but still a fun game. ★★★

WOLFPACK

Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Very deep (ho ho). ***Downers*** – Sub sims never score highly on the thrillometer, and this one is no exception. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as overly techie-biased as many in the genre, but still not one to recommend to the hardened action junkies. ★★

WONDERLAND

Virgin £24.95

Accessories
Windows
Graphics
Wonderland
Text
Verbs
Commands

Uppers – An evocative telling of the classic Lewis Carrol tale utilising a pretty advanced user-interface. ***Downers*** – Unless you've got a very powerful Amiga with a screen that can handle interlace, the whole thing is very unwieldy. It's not got the best parser in the world either. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but after all the hype the product is something of a let-down. Not a patch on *Monkey Island*. ★★★

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER

Elite £24.99

Uppers – Very good copy of the coin-op (sob). ***Downers*** – Poor playability, you never get two seconds on the ball. ***The Bottom Line*** – Knocked out in the first round. ★★

WRATH OF THE DEMON

Readysoft £29.99

Uppers – Cheaper than *Shadow Of The Beast II*. ***Downers*** – Almost exactly the same in every other respect, even down to inclusion of a spiffing intro sequence. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *S.O.T.B.II* you'll already have bought it, so you won't need this. Otherwise a good alternative. ★★

XIPHOS

Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Silky smooth and subtle. ***Downers*** – Takes far too long to get into the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only for the dedicated space trader. ★★

YOLANDA

Millenium £24.99

Uppers – Racy soundtrack. ***Downers*** – Poor graphics make the pixel-perfect positioning required very hard to pull off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just too hard to be any amount of fun to play. ★

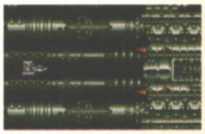
ZARATHRUSTA

Hewson £24.99

Uppers – The *Thrust* gameplay is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. ***Downers*** – At heart though, it's still a game that used to sell for £1.99 going for £25, which isn't a bargain in anyone's language. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but to be honest, not really very good value. ★★★

ZIRIAX

The Software Business £24.99



Uppers – Pretty *Scramble* variant. ***Downers*** – Seriously overloaded in the difficulty department. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. More suited to a budget release. ★★

Z-OUT

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – A huge improvement on *X-Out*. ***Downers*** – The horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with knobs on thing has already been done to death. ***The Bottom Line*** – A better *R-Type* than *R-Type*, but it isn't different enough to make it stand out from the crowd. ★★★

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DO THE write THING

Seems like we didn't have to worry too much about not getting any letters – they're flooding in. Thanks to everyone who's written, but let's have a little less praise (nice though it is) and a few more people who've really got something to say, eh?

● **Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW**

Dear Amiga Power,

For quite a while now I have been receiving copies of The One, mainly because my brother gets Amiga Format so I had to settle for this. Compared to most of the other magazines I thought it was the best one out – until now that is. I went down to my local newsagents and the owner, who knew that I had an Amiga, told me about a new magazine that had just arrived. She pointed it out to me and I started to look through it and of course it was the first issue of AMIGA POWER. I thought it was brill, so I ran back home, got £2.95, ran back and bought it. (I also cancelled my copy of The One.) I am proud to say that I am going to stick with AMIGA POWER because there is no better magazine around.

D.CONDON, Holmfield, Halifax.

Ah, yes. Despite what we said in the intro, we do like to hear this sort of thing. Succinct and to the point, it starts things on a high note, don't you think? Other people enjoy the mag but have their slight quibbles...

Dear Mr Bielby,

Congratulations on a good first issue – informative and amusing – but as a father of two (12yrs and 7yrs) I object to you finding it necessary to print such foul language. I refer to the 'cheat' mode code for *New Zealand Story* – I hope I don't have to censor the next edition before my children can read it.

PALMER, Carshalton, Surrey.

There are a few perfectly convincing arguments for printing that particular cheat code – the fact that it's information that'll prove useful to a large proportion of our readers and that we can't help what form it actually takes, for one – and equally I could defend ourselves by saying that we did print it backwards, so you only had to read it if you really wanted to, and very young children might have had problems decoding it anyway – but instead I'll just apologise for any embarrassment/ inconvenience it might have caused, and undertake to think very carefully before printing anything as strong as that again. Okay?

Yo!

I haven't written to a magazine in ages, so I said what the hell, why not write to that colourful young fig of a mag, AMIGA POWER. First the bad news. Your first issue was only excellent – it could have been much better. Here's how...

- For a start, make it bigger, so you can include all the ideas I'm about to present.
- Include more bitching (like you did with *The Killing Cloud* and *Street Hockey* – it's great!).
- With your Gallup charts you should also include the quantity sold over the past month and since release.
- Make the letters section huge. Letters are a very interesting part of any magazine and are often given too little space – I remember fondly how Crash and Zzap! used to have loads of letters pages. They were brilliant. Also, the letters that have people slagging off what other people have said are great!
- When you're doing interviews with programmers, ask them more than the usual 'What's the new game about?' We like to see the 'people' programming the games. A good start there was the interview with The Assembly Line.
- In most mags nowadays, every time a swear word is used you see a couple of stars to hide the offensive letters! This, I think, is utterly pathetic. If you're trying to make a point, and want to express it strongly, then swear words are ideal, especially in cases of anger and stupidity. Parents probably get all hyped up and say that magazines and books shouldn't be polluting their children's minds with such dirty words, but how many parents out there never swear? None! Most of the swear words used nowadays the children knew light years before their parents anyway.

Now for a message to all those people out there making games. A few handy tips:

- Make sure there's a bit of a challenge (unlike, say, *Nitro*).
- Include loads of atmosphere.
- Make it a bit thought-provoking. Include something that people can get a handle on, like the humour in *Chuck Rock*, or the gore in *Elvira*.
- How about adding something a little bit educational underneath all those glossy graphics, as in *Sim Earth* or *Exile*?
- And, most importantly of all, make sure the game has emotion. How many people out there have played *Kick Off 2* against a friend and never sworn? I'll tell you, none. You get involved in the game. *KO2* has 'emotion'.

And some definite no-no's:

- No high score table. These are always necessary for any long term interest, so people can actually see if they're getting better. A high-score save feature improves lastability even more.
- No ending (or – almost as bad – a crap one). People want more than just a 'Well done. You have just wasted over 50 hours of your life playing this naff game.' If all these companies can do great intro sequences, the least they can do is another one for the people who actually finish the thing!
- No pause option. I hate it when you can't pause a game. Aaahh!

I've been making this up on the spot, so sorry if it's a bit of a ramble. I look forward to great future issues of AMIGA POWER.

Right, I'm off to the pub. Till the sun rises again,

COLIN McGINTY, Paris, France.

Erm, yes, you're right – it has been a bit of a ramble (but fairly interesting all the same). Seems like the swearing is actually a major plus point for some people (so I hope you enjoyed the NZ Story cheat mode, Colin). A few points similar to ones he's made here cropped up in a number of letters, but by far the most popular topic proved to be the old cover-mounted games on magazines chestnut. Here's a selection of the sort of letters we've received – a few of them unfortunately from readers who've chosen to remain anonymous. Have the courage of your convictions people – if you've something to say, don't be afraid to put your name to it.

Dear Amiga Power,

I recently saw the ad for AMIGA POWER and Amiga Shopper in your sister mag Amiga Format. At first my reaction was 'Cor! Mega reviews, colour screenshots, and wow! A free game with every issue too! That's for me, and only £2.95!' I couldn't wait till April 25th, but when I bought AF's May issue, I saw the free supplement. I flicked through every page, and then I read 'FULL PRICE GAMES MOUNTED ON THE FRONT OF MAGS IS KILLING THE SOFTWARE MARKET', and that soon no 16-bit mags would ever carry a complete game. Sod the software market, why not? I mean, about 50-75% of the Top 100 games you reviewed can't be bought any more. (I've been trying everywhere to get System 3's *IK+*, for example, without success.) So if you can't obtain it or if it's been deleted, why can't you give 'em away? If 8-bit mags can still give away two games, why can't 16-bits give just one? I would rather get a free game in AMIGA POWER than pirate it when it was first released (even though I don't do that sort of thing).

I would like to get you to tell other people who own STs, Amstrads, Speccies and C64s to write to Future and other magazine companies and tell them their views, so that the crappy software market will do something about this stupid farce. I hope many other readers agree with me and write in. It looks like the computer industry has gone back down a step – the revolution of free games on mags has been destroyed. I only hope I have either misread the print or it was an April Fool. Oh well.

Yours sadly 'cos of no free game in every ish (even though you promised),

ODDY NODDY, Noddyville, Land Of Nod.

Dear Sir,

I read with astonishment in the free AMIGA POWER supplement that full-price games will no longer be used as magazine cover disks. This was good for the consumer while it lasted, and probably did the larger companies more benefit than they dared let on. The disks used, although sometimes good games when first released, have often been swallowed up by the competition or batch of new releases and therefore probably would not sell at their full prices anyway.

I have always felt that many of the larger companies have many more games than they know what to do with, and this is evidenced by the great number of flourishing budget labels. However, maybe companies could compromise if the following guidelines were used:

- The magazine pays a fee to the company for the loan of its game.
- The magazine pays for all the disk duplication costs.
- The magazine raises it's price by about £1, and contributes 50p to the company .
- The magazine undertakes not to have more than four full-price cover games a year.

If you are still not allowed to do so, maybe you could follow in the footsteps of the new Amiga Fun magazine by distributing previously unreleased games. Admittedly I've never purchased this magazine, so I don't know if the games featured are any good.

STUART N. HARDY, Wales, Sheffield.

Dear Amiga Power,

Imagine the scene. There's a large group of software houses who are extremely worried about piracy. They are constantly losing money each day, and so they form together as ELSPA (who are the main backers behind FAST). They decide to offer one thousand pounds for friends to inform on each other. They are trying their best to get rid of piracy. Then cover mounted games start appearing on cover disks. Quality titles such as *Interphase*, *Balance Of Power*, *E-Motion*, *Gravity*, *Bombuzal* and *Kid Gloves*. These slowly mean that people are getting new quality games nearly once a week for just three or four pounds, so there is no longer a need to pirate games. Now they can get a new game at least every month for just three pounds instead of 25. People no longer have to pirate games so much, because they don't need them any more. Finally they can afford quite good games.

Back to ELSPA. They're the ones behind FAST, remember, they are the ones who are completely against piracy. They decide that they don't want games to appear on cover disks regularly. So they decide to ban all previously released full games from cover disks. They could have just made it so that a magazine could only have three or four full games on a cover disk per year to avoid the state that the Spectrum market has got itself into.

And then piracy starts to get worse again. There are no new games coming out at three or four pounds, so people decide that they'll just have one pirated game, until they get bored of that one, and so on... ELSPA wonder why piracy gets worse, but still does something like this. I think it's quite sad, really.

A WORRIED FAN OF AMIGA POWER, Redhill.

This debate will run and run, I believe. The current ban on cover-mounted complete games may well hold for a while at least, but it's hard to see it being permanent – once something's been done once you can't just dis-invent it and pretend it never happened after all, and it's certainly in the interests of the magazine companies (and games players, of course) to see it happen again. It's difficult to enforce too – I mean, what counts as a complete game? If you just miss the last level off and give away, say, seven

DO THE write THING

levels instead of eight, that's no longer technically a complete game, and therefore no longer covered by the ban. Or is it? We shall see.

Dear Amiga Power,

First of all, may I congratulate you on an excellent magazine. I have been an Amiga owner since July 1990 and have been impressed by its fab graphics'n'sound, but mainly by some of the brilliant games and public domain programs now available. So I thought, 'Why don't I start a magazine of my own?', and I have! It's called 'RESET' and comes on two disks. So why am I telling you? Well, because I think you have a refreshing attitude towards your articles and readers alike, and you would be interested to see one of your readers succeed in a project over the coming months. So if you could publish my address (together with this letter), I would be incredibly grateful.

'RESET', for anyone who is interested, features two disks for just £2.50 inclusive of postage and packing (cheques payable to P. Harrison), and includes all the normal magazine type of articles plus features that I know many Amiga owners would be interested in. For example, the first issue will have a special feature on the Pet Shop Boys and their excellent music. Disk 2 will always have at least one game (PD) and a PD demo or intro. One thing I can guarantee, 'RESET' will be like your own magazine – outstanding value.

PAUL HARRISON, 'RESET', 106 Bordesley Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5LT.

Dear Mr Bielby,

Having looked through your All-time Top 100 Games, your number 44 (*Shanghai* by Activision) is a game that I have been trying to buy for some time. I have contacted many software mail order companies, shops, and even Activision themselves, but it seems that the game is completely unavailable. If you have any information on suppliers of classic games that are over two years old it would be greatly appreciated.

EILEEN SIMON, Maybush, Southampton.

We aren't aware of any companies which specialise in the older classics, I'm afraid, but with regards to Activision's Shanghai, *there is hope. Quite a few people seem to be interested in this game, and yes, it is completely impossible to get hold of at the moment (it's only pure luck that we managed to get our hands on a copy to include in our Top 100 at all). However (and here's the good news) not only is Activision about to bring out the sequel (the cunningly titled* Shanghai II *– it's an August release and we should have a review next issue) but this month's very Cover Disk features a neat PD variant on the game entitled* Tiles. *We're too good to you, we really are.*

Dear Amiga Power,

Yours is proving to be a great magazine, but I have a few bones to pick with you. First, I demand an apology for the way you criticised *Street Hockey*. The graphics are colourful and superbly animated, the sprites leap around the screen like ballet dancers, and I just have to turn the volume on my monitor up to full blast to capture the wonderful sound.

So you can imagine how horrified I was when I glanced at the All-time Top 100 Games to find the immensely dull and unplayable *Rainbow Islands* had just pipped my personal fave for first place. Ah well, second place will do I thought, but no, it wasn't even third! (This was *Speedball 2*, an utterly violent game which I always lose because I tend to faint when the opposition tackle me). No, it didn't take long to dawn on me that *Street Hockey* wasn't mentioned in the Top 100 at all!

What a disaster! I demand an apology, and would suggest that your choice of All-time Top 100 Games was strongly influenced by bribery or alcohol.

Finally, a suggestion. It would go down well with me if you rated the games you review for age-group and violence. I would also be grateful for an extra large warning if the game was written by the violent Bitmaps.

ADRIAN SCOTLAND, Norborough, Leicester.

A-ha! So somebody did take up our challenge to defend Street Hockey *after all! (See 'Oh dear...' in issue one). Actually this was one of a number of attempts we received, but seeing as Adrian's was the shortest and least nonsensical (some of the others were hopelessly convoluted) he gets the free software prize, even though he doesn't actually say what's good about it very much, just that we're wrong. Oh well.*

Dear sir,

I would just like to say that the idea of running a competition to win the All-time Top 100 Games certainly got me reading and re-reading every last detail of AMIGA POWER in the hope of finding the answers – or at least it did until I got to Question 7 (the one about the flight sim).

I really don't expect you to give me any help, but you did say that the answer was to be found within your pages, and it clearly isn't there – I'm now convinced it was aimed at people who regularly visit computer shops and buy each and every game anyway!

I suppose I'll have to forget the compo this time and pray you'll do another similar one in the future. (Pardon me while I go away and sulk).

MR S.J. WILLICOTT, Flint, Clwyd, North Wales.

*Well, S.J., sorry to say but the answer was in the Top 100 Games supplement (not to mention the actual competition page in the first issue of AP), even though it took the form of a rather silly (and slightly crap) joke. The question, for those who missed it, was 'Which flight sim (from the Top 100 Games) might be hard to track down in your local computer shop?' and the answer was, of course...*F-19 Stealth Fighter! *(Because it's all about a difficult-to-track-down Stealth Fighter, of course). Your confusion is understandable, S.J., but you see the compo wasn't actually all that hard to enter after all.*

Dear Sirs,

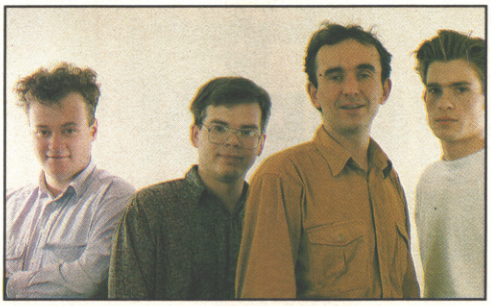
Just a short note to congratulate you on an extremely thorough guide to all that is Amiga games. Now, after subscribing straight away from the Amiga Format freebie supplement, I was surprised to see that a choice of three free games was on offer from yourselves for subscribing now (from issue two). Personally, I think that maybe priorities were mixed up a bit here – those of us who subscribed in the hope that it would be as good as promised should be rewarded for their trust. Okay, gripe over – the free games were superb.

Further to last month's complaining letters from Image Works, people like Stuart Campbell should be encouraged, not muted. The views he expresses are true as he sees them, and not clouded by a huge name or sponsor! Keep up the high standards that you've set to date, and keep remembering that not everybody is the same, we all have different views on games. So if you're in disagreement, software houses, remember – don't shoot the messenger. Just don't produce shoddy products, and don't rush them for release dates, as most people would rather wait for a polished product than a bug-ridden quick cash-in. That's it.

(By the way, whatever happened to *TV Sports Baseball?*).

CHRIS ADCOCK, Sompting, W. Sussex.

Remember, the subs offer in the original supplement was actually at a special, never-to-be-repeated low price, so people who subscribed then got a very good deal after all! TV Sports Baseball *is currently scheduled for release at the end of summer. And that's all we've got room for, I'm afraid. If you've got something to say, write to me, the editor (or, indeed, anyone else you want to talk to) at the address below.* ■



The Bullfrog Boys

Dear Amiga Power,

What a brilliant mag! It's nice to see a magazine that's completely dedicated to one subject – games. I also get both your sister magazines, Amiga Format and Amiga Shopper, but I do have two gripes...

1) What you say in your reviews and the overall score doesn't always seem to tie up. This is rather annoying when reading the magazine as I personally look at all the Bottom Line boxes first and read the ones that sound best out of these, but sometimes I read the other reviews, and you talk about them as if they are better than the ones which receive the higher scores! Please put this right as soon as possible.

2) About your compo to win a job at Bullfrog. I will be entering it, although I doubt if I would be able to work for them as I am in fact under 16. There will be many other people in the same position as me – in fact, I would expect people under 16 to account for at least half of your readers. Why can't you offer more realistic prizes that all your readers will be able to win? I mean, you are supposed to be the 'non-techie' mag, so why a competition where you have to program?

As for not having a complete game on the cover, why don't you have a PD game? These are supposed to be free, so no-one can object to you doing this. There are plenty of decent PD games available that I know of, and using these there would be room on your disk for demos of full price games, or even more PD games. Or even (seeing as you thought it a good idea to have the Bullfrog compo) offer to run the readers very own games? You could offer a prize for the best one sent each month and put it on your coverdisk. I'm sure there are plenty of people who would be eager to have their chance at fame and fortune. (Well, maybe not the second one).

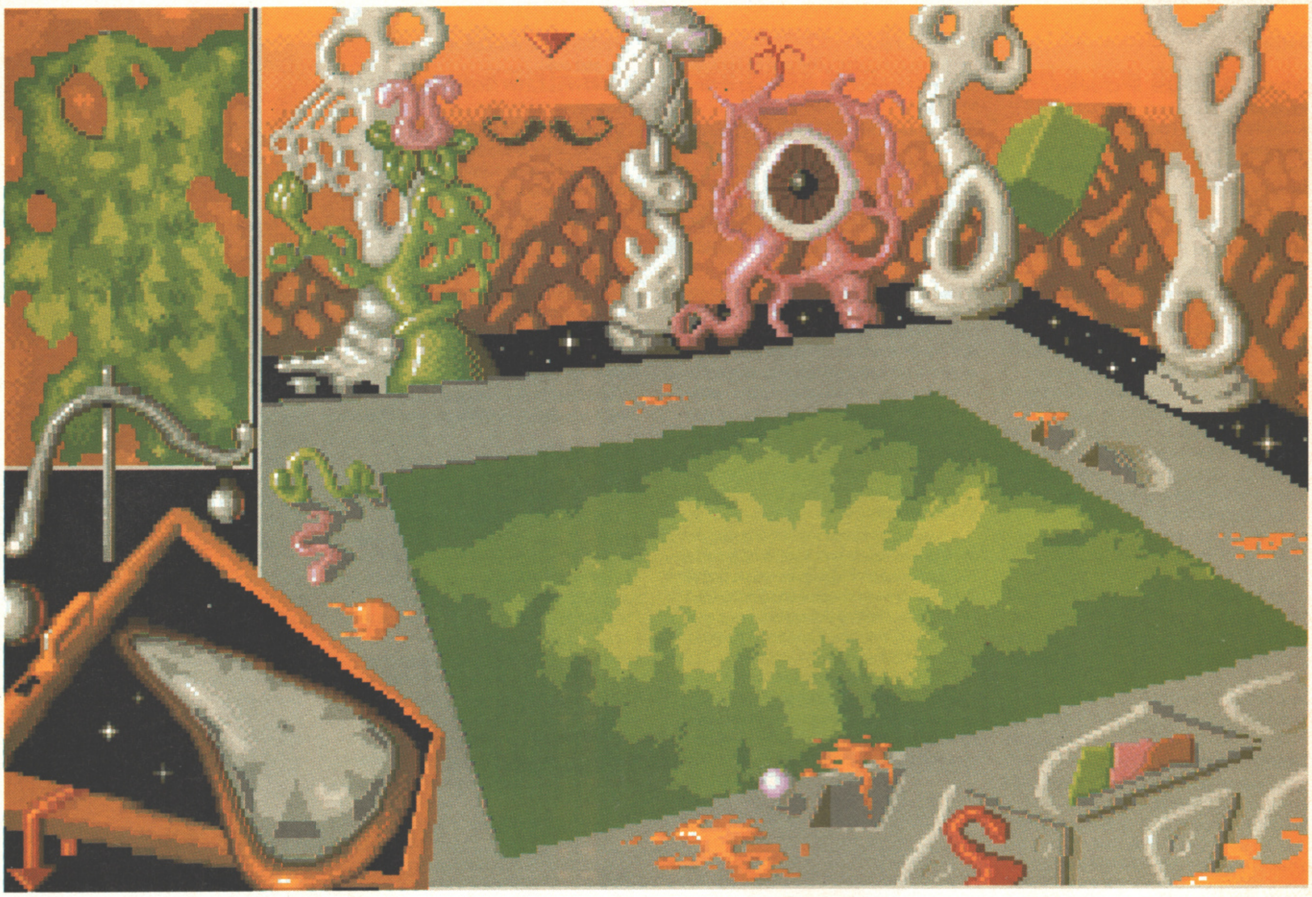
MARK TIFFAN, Littlehampton, West Sussex.

In answer to your points:

1) The reviews and score do tie up! You're just not reading them properly.

2) The Bullfrog competition was a bit of an experiment – and a successful one, we think. Certainly the level of interest has been very high. We're aware, however, that it's something a large number of our readers wouldn't be able to enter, which is why we're running more normal competitions most months – you should stand a better chance with this issue's, for instance.

As for the PD idea, well, just check out this month's disk. Who knows, we might even run some of the Bullfrog competition entries on there in the future!



POWERMONGER IN THE STYLE OF SALVADOR DALI

BY GARY CARR OF BULLFROG

IN THE style OF...

Welcome to the first in what will hopefully become a regular series where we ask well known graphic artists to re-interpret their games in the style of someone else. What would it be like if Pablo Picasso had done the graphics for *Speedball*, Andy Warhol had designed *Sim City* or, indeed, Salvador Dali had a surrealist hand in *Powermonger*? Here's where we find out...

'So far Bullfrog's products have been designed with ultra-realism as a priority, so it was an interesting diversion to for me to redesign *Powermonger* in the style of a surrealist painter.

'First of all, I have renamed *Powermonger*. It's now called "Falling Skies At Daybreak". The first obvious influence for this new version is the work of probably the most famous surrealist of all, Salvador Dali. Dali's well-known painting "The Persistence Of Memory" (the one with the melting clock) was heavily borrowed from for the compass in my version. The grey pillars in the background of the original *Powermonger* have also taken on the Dali influence. It's not all based on Salvador though – I wanted to try a few other things, so the Captains have a bit of a Terry Gilliam (of Monty Python) feel while the playing area itself was influenced by ideas from a book of the paintings of Desmond Morris – yes, the same Desmond Morris who does the nature programmes!'

NEXT ISSUE: The August issue of AMIGA POWER will go on sale on the 25th July, and will (this time we promise!) feature a special tips booklet mounted to the front cover *alongside* the usual disk. Order it now!

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D147 Neighbours Slideshow. Hilarious.
D150 Windsurfer Anims (2 disks/1 meg). Very good.
D153 EPIC Game Demo (1 meg). Amazing, lasts for ages
D160 Exodus Real 3D. Wicked pics.
D169 Budbrain Megademo 2. Well 'ard.
D187 Batman The Movie (1 meg). Cool sound & Anim.
D190 Iraq Demo. Very good and funny.
D194 Prologic PARTY Time. Good long demo.
D205 Walker 1 anim (2 MEG, 2 disks) The original classic.
D206 Walker 2 anim (2 meg, 2 disks). Another big one.
D207 Drunken Skulls a Equamania 2. Cool GFX & music.
D209 Tron the light cycles (2 disks 1 Meg) Long & amazing.
D217 Slycath Demo Comp 1. 5 cool demos
D222 Magnetic Fields Hysteresis. Totally Fab! Get it!
D223 Advance ham invasion. The best pics on an Amiga!
D224 Anarchy System Violator. Mega cool demo!
D225 Slycath Demo Comp 2. 5 amazing demos

MUSIC

M002 Roger Ramjet Remix. Very good & long.
M011 D-Mob 2. Cool & funky music.
M012 D-Mob 4 (2 disks). More cool music.
M026 Amiga Chart Mix 5. Nice beaty stuff.
M029 D-Mob Music 3. Cool long music mix.
M033 Derek & Clive (2 disks). Very funny, Get it!
M034 Total Remix (2 disks) UZI 9mm. Funny.
M035 Digital Concert 2. Wicked music mix
M036 Digital Concert 3. Our favourite.
M037 Digital Concert 4. Another good one.
M038 Digital Concert 5. Cool.
M039 Digital Concert 6. Very good mix.
M049 Ben Elton (XXX). Very funny.
M064 Sound Atax 2. 10 cool bits of music.
M070 Scoopex's Shadow of the beast music. Cool
M075 100 C64 Tunes. Nice music.
M112 Jarre Revolutions. Check it out!
M114 Betty Boo! Just doing the do!
M125 R.A.F. Megamix 2 (2 disks) Very good and long
M134 Miami Vice Theme (4 disks) ER.very, very long.
M138 The Simpsons. Do the Bartman (3 disks) Cool.
M141 Dirty Dancing. Very good sample.
M143 Twin Peaks Theme. Good.
M152 Prologic music 6. 5 cool tunes.

UTILITIES

U002 UEDIT WORD PROCESSOR. Good.
U004 Soundtracker collection (3 disks). Very good.
U010 Ghost Writer & Rainbow Writer. Demo makers.
U014 Flexybase. Good Database.
U020 Dope Intro Maker. Make your own demos.
U021 Ultimate Icon Disk. Loads of Icons & Editors.
U024 S.I.D CLI Utility. Amazing Cli tool, very useful.
U037 Med V2.01. Good music maker.
U039 Amibase V3.76. Very good database.
U047 Jazzbench. Much better workbench.
U048 V.C. Spreadsheet. Very good.
U062 Ultimate Copier & Virus Killer Disk. Loads of copiers.
U063 Clip Art. Animals, cartoon, misc, People & Zodiac.
U064 More Clip Art, buildings, Xmas, transport & misc.
U065 Pagesetter Clip Art. Loads of art on all topics.
U066 C-Light. (1 meg). Very good.
U069 North C 1.3 (2 disks). Latest version.
U070 Pascal PCQ 1.1. Cool pascal stuff.
U071 Rippers, 45 music rippers on 1 big value disk.

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G001 Star Trek 3 (2 disks). The best P.D. game
G008 Board Games, Monopoly etc etc.
G010 Wheel of fortune. Good game.
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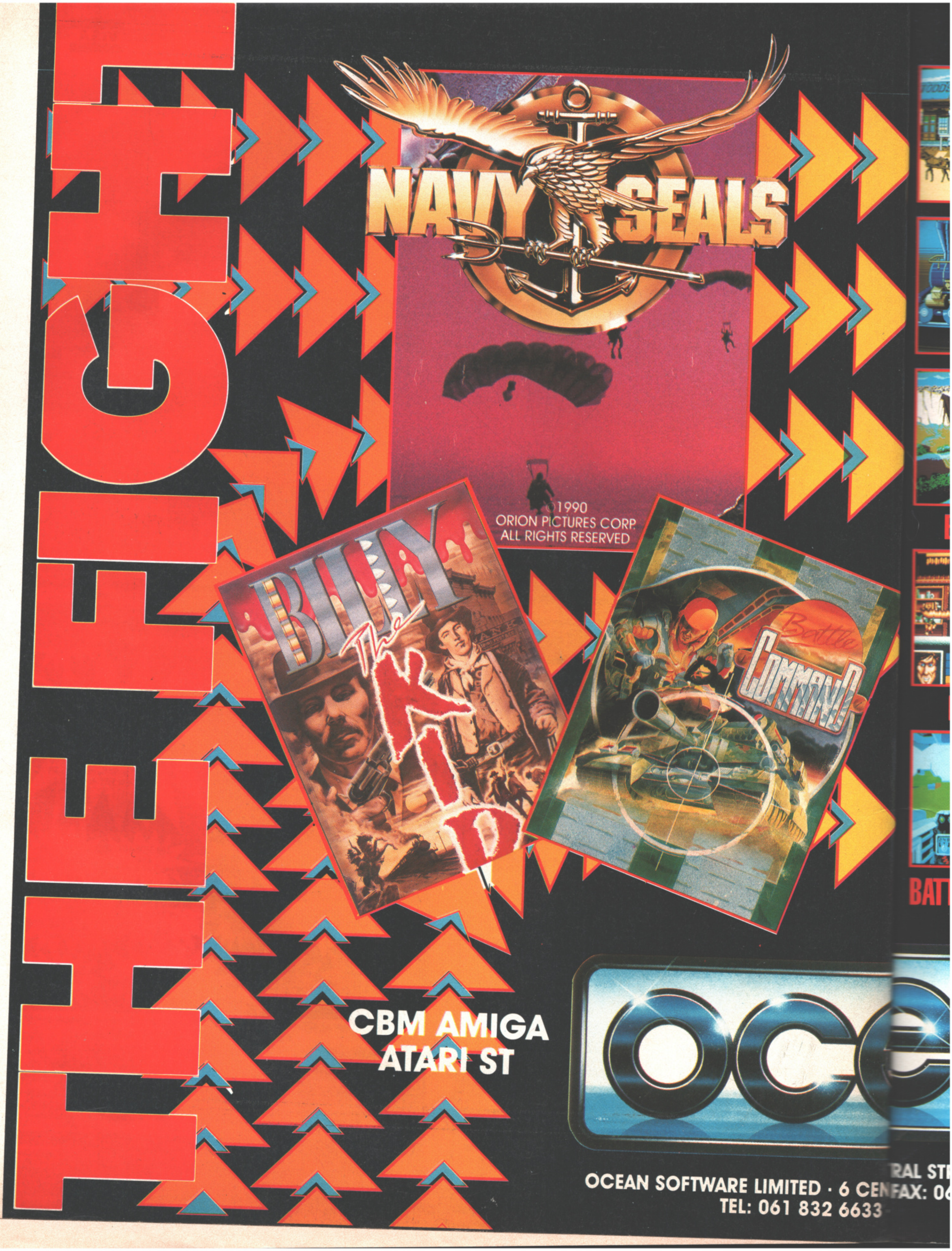
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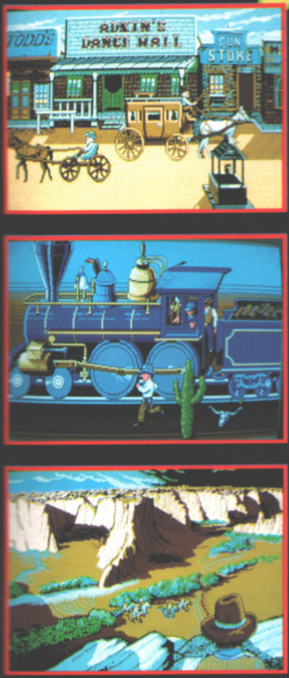

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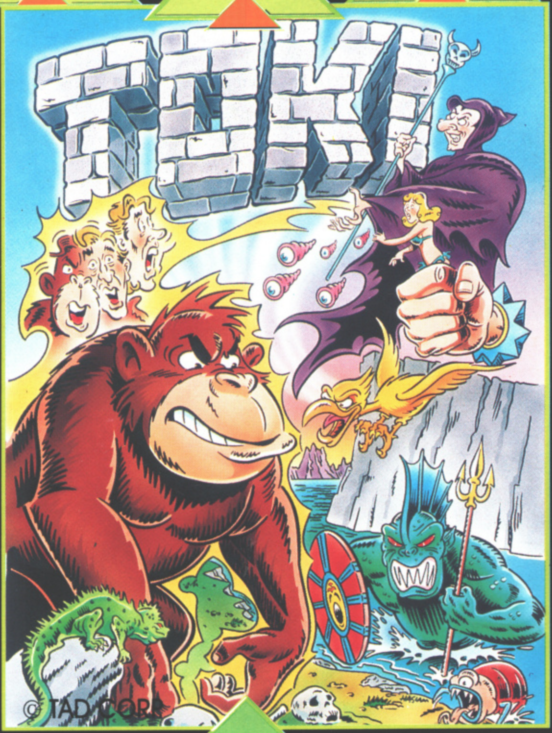

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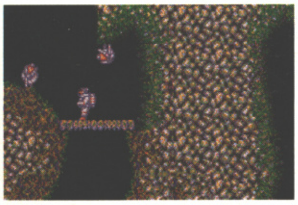

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